

VOLUME FOUR • NUMBER ONE • SPRING 1983

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**The Jesuit Educational
Center for Human Development**



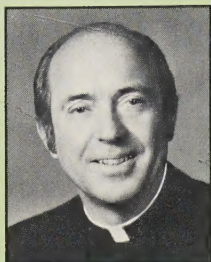
Mysticism for a New Age

Counseling Religious in Crisis

Women Emerging from Midlife Transition

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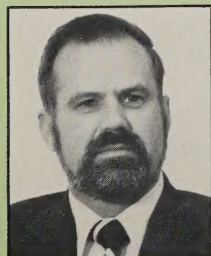
Dreams in Spiritual Direction



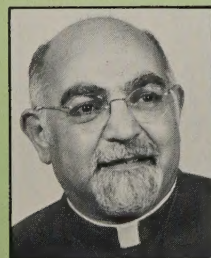
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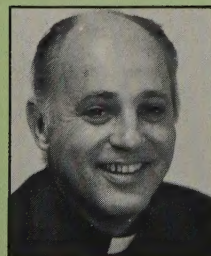
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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The editors are pleased to consider for publication articles relating to the ongoing work of those involved in helping other people through religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, and counseling.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the Senior Editor, Linda Amadeo, P.O. Box 789, Cambridge, MA 02138. Copy should be typewritten double spaced on 8½ × 11 inch white paper with generous margins on each page. Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 5,000 words with no more than 10 listings in the bibliography; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide names of author(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Illustrations, if any, should be submitted as high-quality, glossy, unmounted black-and-white photographic prints. Do not send original artwork.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

Book reviews, which should not exceed 600 words in length, should be sent to the Book Review Editor, J. A. Loftus, S.J., 200 Lake Street, Brighton, MA 02135.

All submissions should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

Editorial Office: (617) 547-1250

EDITORIAL

CALVARY'S LESSON TAUGHT IN THE SKY

Travel can certainly provide distressful experiences at times. The airlines, for example, can lose your luggage, oversell your flight, or delay take-off so long that you miss your connection. I'm never surprised to hear people say they are perfectly happy to live out their years without travelling. They just don't want to risk enduring such annoyances.

These cautious, stay-at-home folks are wise, of course; there's no use adding stress to your life when it can be avoided. But I can't help wishing they were able to tolerate occasional inconveniences for the sake of the novel and sometimes beautiful experiences that could be theirs in the sky.

I wish, for example, they could have been aboard a United "friendly skies" flight from Boston to Denver last month to observe a stewardess engaged in conversation with a mother accompanying her adolescent son. The boy, pathetically contorted by incessant spasms of his neck, arm, and hand muscles—a victim of severe cerebral palsy—was seated beside his father across the aisle from his mother. The parents, the stewardess was told, were taking their son to a medical specialist in Denver who—they had been praying—might be able to help him in some way. Had she acted in the hurried, superficial manner that characterizes the work style of so many of her colleagues, the very beautiful, blonde, about 30-year-old flight attendant would have quickly moved away from the mother and unattractive son with some not-very-appropriate remark like, "Well, I hope everything will come out all right." But she didn't. She stood there in the aisle, gave the woman her undivided attention, listened for at least ten minutes to the mother pouring out the sorrow, guilt, and faint hope that filled her heart, and then, with deep compassion revealed in the expression of her eyes and face, took the woman's hand in her own, spoke obviously heartfelt words of moral support, and

reluctantly turned away from her to attend to other passengers' needs—but not without a prolonged look at the spasm-wracked boy and a smile toward him that should have lifted his heart to the stars.

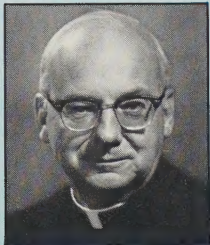
During the remainder of the flight I found myself nearly in tears. The stewardess's response had been beautiful beyond words. I was wondering whether she had been trained as a nurse, social worker, or some other type of counselor. Such an uncommon capacity for empathy must surely have been cultivated in some deeply human forum. Should I ask her? Would she be embarrassed if I did? My curiosity finally prompted me, as we all left the landed plane, to ask a different stewardess if she knew the one I had observed. She said she did, quite well. So I inquired about any previous experience she'd had as a counselor. "None that I know of," the young woman replied. I told her why I was asking—about the profoundly humane way in which she had treated my sister passenger. The response she gave explained everything: "I guess she could act that way because her own little two-year-old daughter fell from a window and is going through her life brain damaged." A heart had learned within the crucible of painful experience to understand other hearts in pain. There is no better way.

Travellers at times encounter such unforgettable situations, priceless graces that punctuate the series of inevitable inconveniences that must be endured. In this instance, I think I learned what it must have meant to Mary, beneath the cross that backed the spasms and pain that tortured her Son, to have Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to support and console her, and how Jesus, by his own sufferings, became capable of comprehending all of our sufferings, great and small. I think I learned, too, to sense what a place there must be waiting in Heaven for those who, through their own sufferings, have learned to lend support to others in pain till the Resurrection of all finally occurs.

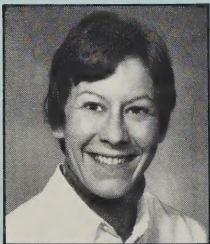
One who is willing to endure the inconveniences of travel can find that the message of Calvary and Easter is not far from the "friendly skies."

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

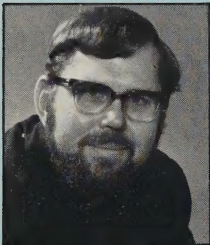
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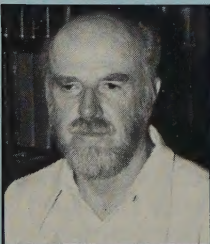
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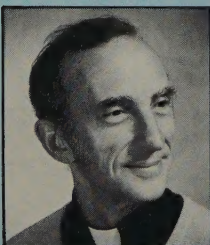
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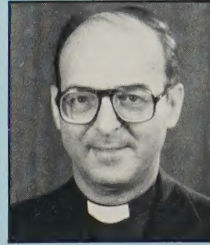
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Father Johnston has been instructing Jesuit tertians and novices at the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Novaliches, in the Philippines. He is one of the world's leading authorities on the relationship between Eastern and Western types of mysticism.



Father Torrens is Professor of English at Santa Clara University, California.



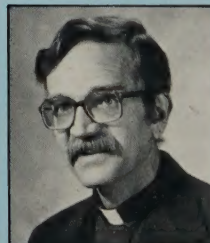
Father Filella is director of Xavier Institute of Management, St. Xavier's College, Bombay, and visiting professor at the University of San Francisco, where he will teach a seminar on Dreams and Spiritual Direction in the summer theology program this year.



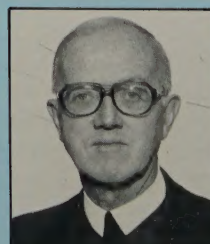
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Brother Reutemann is a full-time resource person in spiritual direction and religious life formation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Alcohol Dangers to Body

During a meeting of men in charge of Jesuit formation in the U.S.A. we discussed the education our younger men get about alcohol and drug abuse. I am satisfied that it is provided for our younger men at different stages of their formation. On reflection, however, it occurs to me that most know very little about the physical dangers of drinking (effect of social or heavy drinking upon the liver, brain, heart, etc.). The remark of one of the formation assistants at that meeting has stuck with me: "I think we are careful to give information to our younger men, but I worry about the men in their forties or early fifties who don't realize their bodies are not those of college kids in their twenties." It strikes me that an article setting out the physical dangers of alcohol could be most informative to those who are in mid-life and older.

Dennis E. Collins, S.J.
Washington, D.C.

Editor's reply: We appreciate suggestions like this. We are writing and will soon publish the kind of article you are requesting.

Response to Criticism

My thanks to John McGoeys for his reflections (Summer 1982) on my article "Ongoing Growth Through Intimacy" (Fall 1981). I would like to reassure him that I am not waiting breathlessly, either, for Greeley's answer to celibate friendships. The purpose of the quote was to underline a stance of openness in an area of religious living where many people are still searching honestly and with commitment for the most appropriate christian and human guidelines.

My main criticism of Father McGoeys's comments is that he has focussed on one quote in the conclu-

sion and as a result has distorted the central point of the paper and misrepresented the overall attitudes and values proposed. My purpose was to restrict my reflections to the one difficulty being experienced by many mid-life religious whom I and others counsel these days, the difficulty of belated sexual awakening brought on by a healthy change of structures in religious life. The message is one of hope and encouragement: that such awakening, while being temporarily messy and sometimes dysfunctional, is normal; it is not a sign of a loss of vocation, and if it can be listened to and integrated into religious commitment, then christian and religious life can be enjoyed more deeply and richly. In McGoeys's words, such "feelings of early personal intimacy when recognized, but neither indulged nor exploited, quietly subside" and presumably enrich the person.

Many of McGoeys's comments come from a misunderstanding of terminology. In my article I am presuming a distinction within the word "sexuality" that has become commonly accepted in recent years (cf. Goergen, *The Sexual Celibate*, 1974; Kraft, *Sexual Dimensions of the Celibate Life*, 1979; etc.). Goergen puts the distinction clearly: "Sexuality has two dimensions—the affective and the genital. Although some equate sexuality and genitality, I see sexuality as a broader term. Genitality is only one dimension of the sexual life. Yet genitality often emerges as the core of what we think of when we think of sexuality. . . . The affective dimension is the totality of affection, friendship, and tenderness in life. This is the area exhibited in compassionate people who are not only able to socialize their sexuality but in rare cases universalize it" (Goergen, pp. 52–53, 57). Presuming such a distinction and presuming that a celibate friendship automatically eliminates genital sexuality, I explicitly restricted my treatment to *affective* sexuality: "The serious and potentially damaging consequence of this way of dealing with *affectivity*"; "This suppression of sexuality and its expression in *affective*

closeness." That is precisely the distinction between affective and genital sexuality and I am NOT talking about the latter, as McGoeys suggests. Hence the confused implications of his statement that "I would hope that all our little games played with our pseudo-freedom just before and since Vatican II have matured us enough to recognize that sexual intimacy per se never leads to personal love or intimacy, but rather disillusion the players." If he is speaking of genital sexuality I agree. If he is speaking of affective sexuality I disagree. I am as equally convinced as he that genital activity is outside the scope of celibate friendship.

Far from minimizing what real "personal love" is all about, my article reinforces it. Such a relationship demands "firm loyalty, strong mutual support, a shared view of the world, deep mutual self-disclosure, and shared vulnerability.... a willingness to risk being influenced by closeness to someone else, to embark on a real engagement with another, to accept an overlapping of personal spaces, and most threateningly of all, to be open to change.... [Such love] demands an awareness of self, of strengths and limitations, and a willingness to risk engaging with another in a game-free relationship, with the possible consequence that we might be summoned to change and grow." That is surely a good and very demanding foundation for loving another, and it is totally in agreement with the message of Jesus. To say that the article gives "statistical evidence that would satisfy a sociologist or a psychologist, but not a christian" is nonsense, nor do I accept the implied split between christian and human values.

Finally I disagree with McGoeys that I have avoided "delineating a future that, while aware of

past mistakes, would lay out the loving future efficacious friendships require if 'they are to recognize by your love that you are My disciples.' " If we add to the previous requirements for genuine affective intimacy those of sound identity formation, game-free challenge, a third party, openness in community (omitted in McGoeys's list), nonpossessiveness and nonexclusiveness, and honesty in prayer before God, I suspect that Jesus would be more than happy with the kind of loving that would emerge. To want more certainty than that would, in my book, be wishing to avoid that ambiguity that is part of any responsible moral decision.

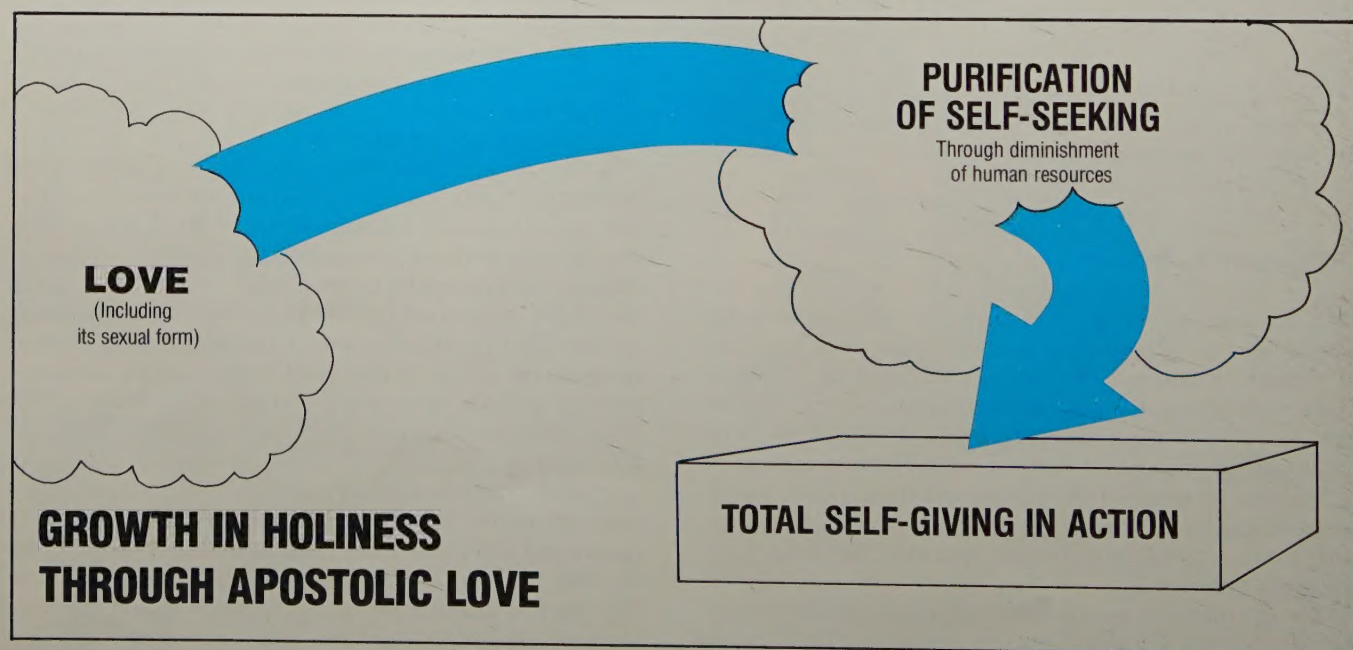
Peter W. Cantwell, O.F.M.
Melbourne, Australia

Confusing Presentation

I'm still wondering about the illustration that accompanied Father Futrell's fine article "Growing Older Gracefully" in your Fall 1982 issue. All I could make out from my copy was "Growth in holiness through apostolic love" and "Total self-giving in action." What was I supposed to read inside the two green clouds? (Were you giving us some sort of spiritual Rorschach inkblot test?) On second glance, they look more like thumb prints than clouds. At any rate, I need your help to ease my confusion.

Mary Ann Steinnecker
South Windsor, Connecticut

Editor's reply: We apologize for the defective printing. Here's how it should have appeared.



COUNSELING RELIGIOUS IN CRISIS

RICHARD P. VAUGHAN, S.J., Ph.D.

Crisis is a mental state arising from stresses beyond the coping capacity of the individual. Given the right conditions, it is something that can happen to anyone. In *Working with People in Crisis*, psychologist Samuel Dixon defines it as "a functionally debilitating mental state resulting from the individual's reaction to some event perceived to be so dangerous that it leaves him or her feeling helpless and unable to cope effectively by usual methods." He explains that crisis is precipitated by a threat to survival, to bodily integrity, or to some psychosocially determined need perceived to have life and death value. Some examples are accidents resulting in permanent impairment, death of a loved one, or the loss of employment. The loss or threatened loss is so important to the individual that he or she feels unable to continue living. The resulting threat and inability to cope produce a high level of anxiety.

CASE STUDY

Over the course of ten years, Sister M. taught each of the four lower elementary grades in parochial schools. She has better than average intelligence but considers herself inferior to most in her community. As a child, she found school difficult, disliked it, and particularly remembers receiving

harsh treatment from two teachers. She earned a college degree and a teaching credential with better than average grades. Last spring the principal asked her to teach the eighth grade because the teacher was moving to another school and the principal thought it important to have a religious in that position. After much hesitation, Sister M. reluctantly agreed and apprehensively spent the whole summer preparing for her new assignment. Just before school began she learned that her mother, who had never been sick a day in her life, was diagnosed as having terminal cancer. Earlier in the summer, a close friend in the community left the congregation.

After two weeks of school, Sister M.'s behavior suddenly changed. Previously a lively, outgoing person, she withdrew from the community and missed common prayer, recreation periods, and occasional meals. Others noticed that she spent much time in her room, and she seldom spoke when she was with the community. In the classroom she was tense and ill at ease, meeting resistance and opposition from the students. She had a problem maintaining discipline, something she had never experienced before. She attributed this to her lack of preparation, but she found that increased preparation did little to change the attitude of the students. She was constantly on the verge of tears and afraid

When all the ways of handling a threatening situation fail, we are on the way to a crisis

of losing control of both herself and the students. She slept poorly and dreaded getting up in the morning to face another day. Headaches became routine. She finally reached the point where she could no longer carry on. She went to her superior, told her that she had to get away, and suggested that she take a leave of absence from the congregation.

COMPONENTS TO CONFRONT

A closer look at some elements in this case will aid in understanding the nature of crisis. First, a radical change in mental state occurred. An individual who functioned well at work and in community suddenly became disturbed, troubled, and unable to meet the demands of her school and community. Second, three events took place that became hazards or threats to her psychological well-being: the prospect of failure in her career and apostolic work, the imminent death of her mother, and the loss of an intimate friend. It should be noted that events themselves do not necessarily cause crisis, but what these events mean to the individual can result in a crisis. This partially explains why the same event or series of events becomes a crisis for one person but not for another. In the case of Sister M., each of these three events serves as a threat, with failure in the classroom being the greatest threat.

All three make demands on her coping skills, and she must use some method to confront and handle them. At school, she probably relied on methods that proved successful in lower grades, but found them lacking in the eighth grade. Consequently her anxiety, fear, and tension increased and resulted in further loss of self-confidence. She tried other

strategies, like giving more time to preparation, but when these failed, her anxiety and tension spiraled.

The second stressful event, the diagnosed illness and probable death of her mother, constituted a new experience for Sister M., so she had no previously learned coping skills to deal with it. Her mother had never been critically ill before, and no deaths had occurred in the family other than those of grandparents when she was a small child. Now she must deal with her own feelings about death and with how to relate to a dying mother. Whenever she was upset in the past, she would talk with her friend who recently left the congregation. Now she felt a barrier between herself and her friend, and the barrier blocked any sharing. The friend's departure presents the third threat and results in a double loss—the loss of a personal friend and someone with whom she could speak intimately.

The combination of several threatening, anxiety-producing events coupled with an inability to handle them in an adequate manner resulted in her crisis reaction.

COPING WITH LIFE

Growing up, we learn ways of handling the demands and problems of life, and we use these automatically as the occasion arises. We run into difficulty when faced with a new situation for which we have no coping skills or when the previously learned skills prove ineffective for one reason or another. Usually, when we discover that what worked in the past does not work now, we try a number of hit-or-miss solutions that sometimes are successful but more often are not. When all the ways of handling a threatening situation fail, we are on the way to a crisis.

More than forty years ago the Boston Coconut Grove fire took the lives of several hundred young college students. Psychiatrist Erich Lindemann became professionally involved with the relatives of the victims. He noticed that some worked through their grief and depression, whereas others lapsed into a state of crisis, and he began to ask himself what could be done to help people in similar situations to prevent a crisis reaction from occurring. His research marks the beginning of a field of research and study, furthered by Gerald Caplan, Howard J. Parad, Edwin S. Shneidman, Leopold Bellak, Leonard Small, H. L. Resnik, and Paul Polak, with Caplan contributing a theory of Crisis Intervention.

People vary greatly in their reactions to stressful situations. What constitutes a crisis for one is not necessarily a crisis for another, and may even become a challenge that results in significant personal growth. Whether an event provokes a crisis depends on a number of factors. First, and perhaps most important, is the meaning the event has for

the individual. Any event seen as seriously threatening to physical or psychological survival and well-being makes that event potentially crisis-provoking. For Sister M., a modicum of success at teaching was vital. Like many other religious, she based her worth as a person on job performance, and failure in the classroom was equated with failure as a person.

Another factor is the person's level of self-esteem and self-confidence. If individuals have a low opinion of themselves and little confidence in their ability, the event becomes more threatening and anxiety-provoking. Sister M. approached teaching the eighth grade with limited self-esteem and low self-confidence. She personally thought that she was not bright enough to teach the eighth grade, even though others had assured her she was.

A final factor is damaging past experience. Past success or failure often determines how we view a situation and how we adjust to it in the future—whether we allow success to breed success or failure to breed failure. Sister M.'s negative past experiences caused the school environment to be threatening from the very beginning. Gifted older students presented a special problem because she felt inferior to them.

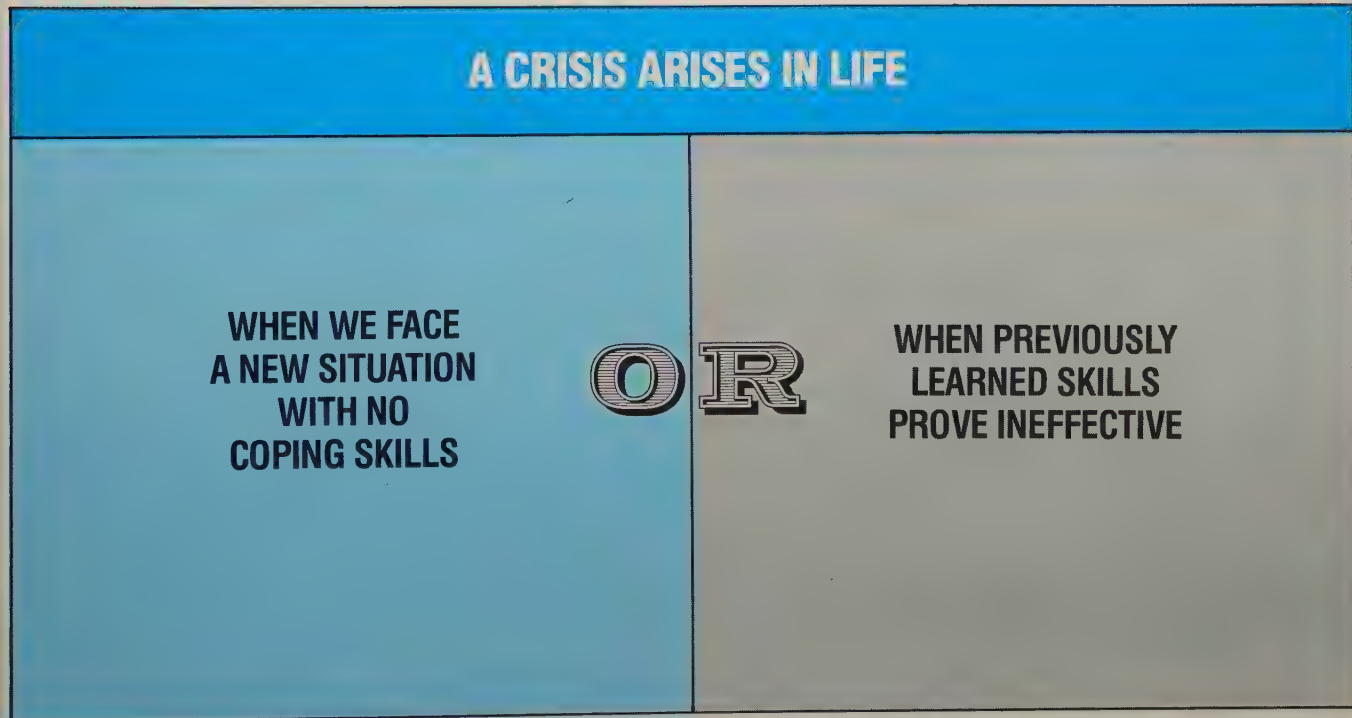
CRISIS-PROVOKING EVENTS

Anything involving a loss can precipitate a crisis. Examples are the death of a parent; the departure of a close friend from the congregation; being

changed, dismissed, or retired from one's primary apostolate; or the loss of vocation or faith. Sometimes, anticipated loss can be as threatening as an actual loss, such as the fear of being rejected for first vows or final profession, or the fear of not being ordained to the priesthood. Strange as it may sound, promotion can also provoke a crisis. For instance, a religious may be appointed superior or administrator and after a week or two find him/herself in a state of crisis as a result of new duties and responsibilities.

Violation of the ideals of religious life can cause a loss of self-esteem and the esteem of others and can bring about a crisis. Some examples would be incarceration for drunken driving, a court trial for the use of drugs, overt heterosexual or homosexual activity, or reverting to drinking after a long period of sobriety. Finally, any sudden change in status that is damaging to physical or psychological well-being, such as a serious injury as the result of an accident, radical surgery, or contracting an incurable disease, can bring on the state of crisis.

How religious react to any of these potential crises depends on what the events mean to them. For example, the priest who takes great pride in his physique and athletic ability is suddenly crippled in an automobile accident. He is more likely to see this as a threat to survival than will the frail scholar whose life has been focused on research and teaching. To be of assistance to individuals in crisis, it is essential to know what the events mean to them and how the events affect their lives. The



temptation is to view these from our own frame of reference.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A STATE OF CRISIS

People react differently. The signs are clear to some; there are almost no signs for others. The most common indicator is a radical change in behavior. An outgoing, lively person suddenly becomes quiet and withdrawn; a usually tranquil person becomes volatile and easily upset. Some are given to crying spells for the first time and for no apparent reason. Some show obvious signs of depression in sadness, tiredness, self-depreciation, and radical changes in patterns of eating and sleeping.

The most difficult persons are those who "stonewall." They appear to be handling quite well such events as their removal from a position of authority or the departure of a close friend from the active priesthood. They take the hurt philosophically and say, "everything happens for a reason. I may not be able to see the reason now, but someday I shall." Or they cover over their true feelings by relying on faith, "It's God's will. My father is better off now in heaven." They deny their true feelings by intellectualizing or spiritualizing them, yet the feelings continue to do damage. Sometime later these feelings may move closer to consciousness, and compounded with other life-threatening events, they may provoke a crisis reaction.

ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

The two most prevalent experiences of the person in crisis are anxiety and depression, with one or both being present. Overwhelming anxiety manifests itself in a variety of ways. It can affect almost every organ in the body. It makes the person feel as if there is something physically wrong. You may hear such a person say, "I feel so nervous and scared, like something terrible is going to happen." Palpitations of heart, pains in the chest, inappropriate perspiration, and a general sense of restlessness may all be part of what the person is experiencing, as well as complaints about impaired concentration, or inability to think clearly or make decisions. Other consequences of anxiety are feeling on edge, irritable, and impulsive.

Depression is another common reaction. Occasionally, we all feel down or blue, but this state is very different from the debilitating depression of the person in crisis. Dejection, sadness, and despair, accompanied by feelings of worthlessness and self-depreciation, invade every aspect of life. Depressed people are generally pessimistic, feel helpless and hopeless, and have a tendency to be preoccupied with themselves, showing little or no interest in others.

In the midst of crisis some experience only anxiety, others depression, and still others a mixture of

The two most prevalent experiences of the person in crisis are anxiety and depression

both. They may also feel guilty and angry. Individuals in crisis need to sort out their feelings and link them to their proper source. To do this they will usually need some help.

A number of research findings are useful for assisting people in crisis. An immediate reaction to crisis is unusual. Most people will generally experience the crisis ten to fourteen days after the event that triggers the reaction. Second, most crises are time-limited and pass after six to eight weeks. In the case of a serious crisis, permanent psychological damage can result if the individual simply waits out the crisis without seeking any kind of help. The whole reaction may surface once again given another crisis-provoking situation. The longer the person in crisis puts off caring for the condition, the greater the odds of lasting damage and the longer the treatment period. In severe cases, the usual time of treatment is four or five weeks of six to twenty sessions, meaning that the helper sees the client several times a week, especially in the beginning.

HELPING THE PERSON IN CRISIS

If the crisis is debilitating and severely handicapping, the individual will most probably need professional help. Religious often deny the need for such help, viewing it as a sign of weakness and an indictment of their faith and spirituality. Even under the most trying circumstances, they say to themselves, "If I just put myself entirely in God's hands, I will be all right." A superior or friend can be most helpful by convincing the religious to ac-

cept professional assistance, pointing out that their reluctance to seek help is understandable, since no one likes to admit to weakness. But obvious suffering and an unimproved condition requires the kind of assistance that will bring relief. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric social workers are often trained in crisis intervention.

Because of feelings of hopelessness, severely depressed persons may counter such urging with "No one can help me. It's hopeless." Mention of the work of a psychiatrist or psychologist who has helped others in the community or the congregation may enkindle a needed spark of hope and cause them to accept counseling.

It is useful for the superior or friend to obtain the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of several professionals whose competence is known and toward whom they or others have respect and confidence. Usually, the depressed person in crisis is in no position to locate professional help. It is also wise to encourage the individual to avoid procrastination and to contact the professional as soon as possible.

If the one in crisis can still function in apostolic work and in community although obviously troubled, a supportive superior or friend may be sufficient. Many religious experience crises during their lifetimes and never seek professional help. Some go

it alone; others are greatly assisted by a superior or close friend.

The professional crisis counselor uses a number of procedures, some of which can be useful to the superior or friend trying to help a fellow religious. These are: (1) being present, (2) attentive listening, (3) empathic understanding, (4) clarifying feelings, (5) helping settle on action steps, and (6) monitoring.

Being Present. What the individual in crisis needs most of all is the presence and availability of a caring person. Feelings of loneliness can be overwhelming, and the very presence of a concerned person is a powerful tool in the healing process. In a minor crisis, just knowing that someone cares and is available is often enough. Some superiors mistakenly think that their major function as helper is to give advice. They fail to recognize the great benefits of presence and availability. There are times when we all need to depend on the strength of another, and crisis is one such time.

Other superiors think that they can be of greatest assistance by offering spiritual guidance. They fail to realize that talk of God and the spiritual world frequently falls on deaf ears when the ears are those of a depressed person. Depression has a way of blunting one's faith and clouding its meaning. Caring presence with a desire to help in accord

FACTORS PROVOKING A PERSONAL CRISIS

1

THREAT TO PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVIVAL AND WELL-BEING

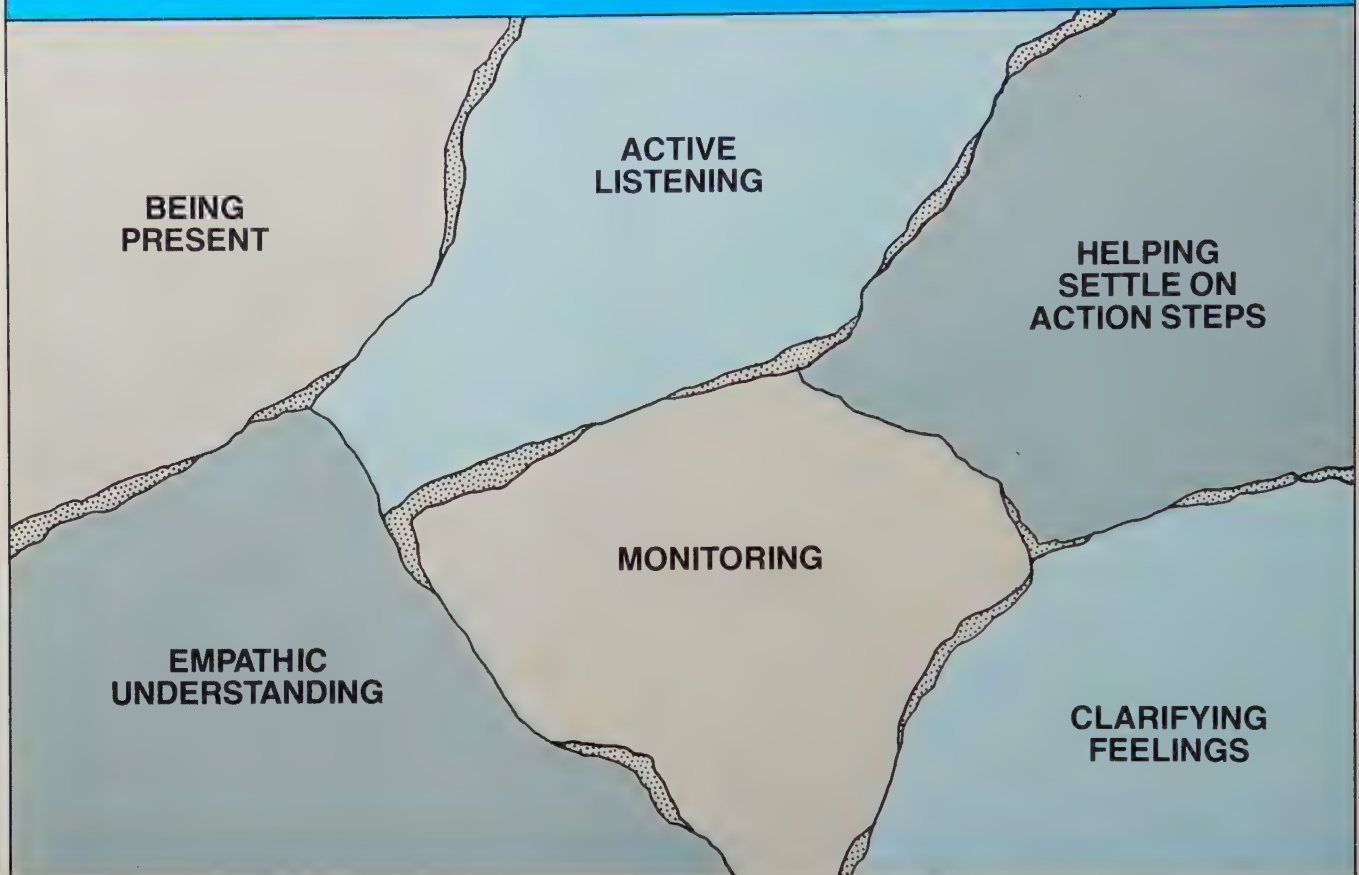
2

LOW OPINION OF SELF AND LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

3

BAD EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST

WAYS OF HELPING SOMEONE IN CRISIS



with one's capacity is much more beneficial.

Attentive Listening. Attentive listening means giving one's total and undivided attention to the other person and tells the other that we are interested and concerned. Listening is a difficult work that we will not undertake unless we have deep respect and care for the other. As counselors, we listen not only with our ears but with our eyes, mind, heart, and imagination as well. We listen to what is going on within ourselves, as well as to what is taking place in the person we are hearing. We listen to the words of the other, but we also listen to the messages buried in the words. We listen to the voice, the appearance, and the body language of the other.

We are attentive listeners when we focus entirely upon what is said and the circumstances under which it is said. We do not use selective listening by hearing only what interests us and fits with our preconceptions. We simply try to absorb everything the speaker is saying verbally and nonverbally without adding, subtracting, or amending.

Attentive listening is a demanding process to be undertaken only if we truly care for the other person.

Empathic Understanding. In his latest book, *A Way of Being*, Carl Rogers describes empathy as a way of being with another:

It means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment by moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever that he or she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in the other's life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments; it means sensing meanings of which he or she is scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover totally unconscious feelings because this would be too threatening. It includes communicating your sensings of the person's world as you look with fresh and unfrightened eyes at elements of which he or she is fearful. It means frequently checking with the person as to the accuracy of your sensings, and being guided by the responses you receive.

Talk of the spiritual world frequently falls on deaf ears when the ears are those of a depressed person

As previously stated, the situation itself does not provoke crisis, but what the situation means to the person can do so. For this reason, empathic understanding is crucial, for it is only by entering the other's world and seeing the crisis as he or she sees it that we come to an accurate understanding of the problem and reflect our understanding back to the one in crisis for verification.

Clarifying. Talking to another helps to clarify one's thoughts and feelings. When we talk, we verbalize what is going on within. The process helps us to understand ourselves and the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Individuals in crisis usually need to clarify how they feel, since feelings are the precipitators of crisis. If the counselor can bring to their attention the anxiety, distress, or anger they are experiencing, this makes them more aware, and awareness allows for confrontation and appropriate handling of painful feelings. Thus, encouraging crisis victims to describe their inner experience in detail helps the clarifying process. If we

can take one more step and respond by reflecting the thoughts and feelings we have heard, we move the process still further.

Helping Settle on Action Steps. The opportunity to talk with a caring person is often sufficient because individuals see what is happening and then take the needed steps to resolve the problem. There are times, however, when persons are paralyzed with indecision and need someone else to suggest possible ways of extricating themselves, with the freedom to reject such suggestions if they seem inappropriate.

Loss of self-confidence is frequently the outcome of a crisis reaction. Taking over the other's life and giving advice simply amplifies this loss of self-confidence. The opportunity to work out a solution helps to restore self-confidence. It should be at least a cooperative venture in which the superior and the individual work together to formulate steps leading to a solution.

A tendency to act impulsively is characteristic of many in crisis. Often the person will jump at any solution that affords an escape. A common first solution is to leave religious life. Since anxiety and depression impair judgment and decision making, the counselor may have to be very directive in the hope of forestalling a poor decision made under situational duress.

Monitoring the Action Steps. The last stage in crisis counseling is monitoring the individuals as they go about putting the solution into action. In subsequent sessions they give progress reports on their degree of success or failure, and obstacles or blocks to success are discussed. If the current solution brings about no significant change in their lives, other approaches are formulated. The counselor is supportive rather than judgmental, fully realizing how difficult it is for persons in crisis to act, especially if they are depressed.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Aguilera, D. C., and Messick, J. M. *Crisis Intervention*. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby, 1974.
- Dixon, L. *Working with People in Crisis*. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby, 1979.
- Ivey, A. E., and Authier, J. *Microcounseling*. 2d ed. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1971.

WOMEN EMERGING FROM TRANSITION

SHEILA MURPHY, Ph.D.

Research publications, summer workshops, and television talk shows are eradicating some of the mystery that has surrounded the developmental task of midlife transition. Women religious and their lay sisters are discovering that midlife upsets, which they once thought crazy, odd, or bizarre, are actually understandable expressions of the search for self.

Of 144 women religious who completed a lengthy questionnaire as part of a research study on midlife transition, many acknowledged pain and confusion as they struggled with vocation uncertainty, arid prayer, family problems, authority conflicts, disenchantment with community, boredom, sexual involvements, anger, and mourning. The results, summarized and discussed in this article, can be reassuring to sisters currently immersed in the turmoil.

This investigation, like all studies of psychological development, carried the inherent danger of overemphasizing the symptoms while underemphasizing the importance of understanding the human life span. The midlife transition and its symptoms are real; they exist and they are painful.

But they do not stand apart from the flow of total life emergence. Although the onset of the transition can be identified by personal mourning precipitated by an awareness of physical decline and inevitable death, its conclusion can be recognized by greater peace, integration, and appreciation.

What benefit do these years of upset, mourning, confusion, anger, boredom, questioning, and prolonged "dark night of the soul" produce? What growth evolves? Is there resurrection after such death?

Virtually unanswerable to sisters immersed in the troubled waters of midlife transition, these questions evoke soft smiles from those who have surfaced from the agitated waves. Feelings do become more pleasant, peace does return, and the ebb and flow of life normalize as the disparate facets of personality are reintegrated to form a more complete, understanding, and understandable woman religious.

While I have had some painful moments in my last years, I am getting more comfortable with who I am and appreciate the struggles. As I'm getting older I panic less concerning my being human and

weak . . . [I] guess I'm getting more accepting of self. (age 38 years)

Overall, it has been a tremendous adventure. I have been touched by deep joys and deep sadnesses in my thirties and have grown tremendously. If the forties can top this, I will be delighted. (age 40 years)

The past five years have been the most painful of my life, but they were the most growthful. I had to come to the realization that, in spite of the love I feel for people—some especially so—my survival and growth do not depend upon any one person or circumstance. I had to let go of people, places, and my own expectations to come to a new freedom. I had to change my way of perceiving my world. I believe happiness is in one's attitude, and I try to receive life as a gift. I'm glad I had to struggle because I am more alive and free than I ever dreamed I could be. (age 50 years)

I hope that anyone who experiences a painful growing would realize these are ordinary, acceptable kinds of things that one may have to go through. I feel that my greatest strength lies in the fact that changes did take place—and will continue to take place—in my life and I was able to flow with this development in my life thanks to the understanding and support I have had from my community. (age 49 years)

Several participants asked if every person has to have a midlife transition, a question that reflects skepticism about the plethora of symptoms more than a rejection of the transition *per se*. Experiencing life events, whether they are grieving periods or growth periods, is part of the dynamics of human progress and of being in the process of becoming. Failure to experience change indicates either a refusal to develop or an inability to recognize change when it occurs. All persons are challenged by change and transition in some form, but the unique experience of those transitions reflects the individual's specific coping style expressed through her personality.

EXPERIENCE IS UNIQUE

To understand the inevitability of lifelong change, it is necessary to clarify some terms. A person does not *have* an adult transition in the same way that she has some money or has a disease or has friends, all of which suggest possession or acquisition; rather, she *experiences* growth and development as an intrinsic component of the ongoing evolution of her personality. Experiences become acquisitions, but they remain elusively personal, idiosyncratic, internal, and unique. The process leads to a repertoire of accumulated life events, which become the possessions of adult development.

Living her life, each individual is qualitatively distinct from every other; and her unique process of

adult emergence, especially the midlife transition, is ultimately her own. Since the commonness of humanity implies more similarities than differences, documentation of trends characteristic of a specific transition is possible, but empirical validation does not preclude the uniqueness of the individual experience.

As a very personal process, the midlife transition is as multifaceted as the woman living it. If the question "does every person *have* to have a midlife transition?" means "does every person have to undergo every condition that can be encountered in the transition?" then the answer is a firm "no." But if the question means "does every person undergo a unique developmental process characterized by questioning, mourning, interiorization, and integration sometime between the ages of 33 and 45?" then the answer is an unequivocal "yes."

The commonality of adult development exists even if the personal experience of it varies. Religious who prefer high activity levels accompanied by little introspection or reflection might go through periods of uncertainty in their jobs or confusion over their roles in community without analyzing why they are suddenly so dissatisfied with events that were previously pleasurable. Others who prefer to reflect and analyze their daily involvements might plunge deeply into the tasks of grief work and individuation, knowing that they are doing so and aware that they are experiencing a life transition that is somehow different from anything encountered before.

Is it possible to go through a midlife transition without knowing it? The answer to this frequently asked question demands consideration of personality more than of data. Some religious reflect extensively on their daily lives, constantly comparing and contrasting their various present reactions with those experienced in the past. The likelihood of recognizing a difference in their lives is greater for these religious than for those who are less inclined to regular introspection. Those preferring to focus on life events rather than on their reactions to them might be uncomfortable or dissatisfied with their work, families, or friends without necessarily embarking on a concentrated resolution of existential polarities or mourning processes. As one religious summarized, "I knew that something was wrong—that I was somehow different—but beyond that I had no idea of what was happening. I thought I was unhappy because I wasn't meeting all my obligations or because I was sick or something."

Applying value judgments to qualitatively different experiences is dangerous. It is impossible to conclude that a sister who is poignantly aware of and able to name her midlife transition is a better person than one who is unable to articulate the whys and wherefores of her distress. The midlife journey is basically internal, and only the individual herself can assess the extent of her personal involvement. Some are more capable of introspec-

THE MIDLIFE TRANSITION

30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50



BETWEEN AGES 33 AND 45
EVERYONE UNDERGOES

•
A UNIQUE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS
•

WITH SELF-QUESTIONING, MOURNING, INTERIORIZATION, AND INTEGRATION

tion; some are less capable of it. It is also unrealistic to conclude that those who are aware of going through a midlife transition while immersed in the throes of that process are guaranteed a more successful resolution of it than those who are unable to name their experience.

RESOURCES AID TRANSITION

One sister asked, "Since I breezed through my adolescent identity crisis, and since I had no problem adjusting to my 20s and early 30s, can I expect a smooth time of it during the midlife transition?" Successful resolution of earlier developmental transitions does not guarantee successful resolution of later ones. The ability to adapt to developmental tasks is certainly facilitated by well-developed coping skills, and it is logical to assume that persons with strong coping skills will survive the midlife transition better than those with weak coping skills. But adaptation to transition is determined more by the balance of personal resources and deficits than by past experience. Feeling personally in control of one's destiny, believing in positive outcomes, having a strong support system of friends and family, and being in good health are all resources; the lack of any of these becomes a deficit. The mutability of these systems underpins

the fact that earlier developmental successes do not inevitably lead to subsequent victories. Family members die or move, friends change, and personal perceptions vary. As the constellation of resources and deficits shift, so do adaptation skills.

Growth is a continuous choice, a repeated "yes" to the planned and unplanned evolution of life events. Everyone has the option of nongrowth and can deny the midlife transition, never experiencing (or at least never acknowledging) any symptoms. Not to experience the upsets, then, is not necessarily an indication of fine coping skills but might instead reflect a decision for nongrowth.

The 144 sisters who participated in the study, as well as the numerous women who have participated in other research projects, have reported a plethora of symptoms and behaviors associated with the midlife transition. These include everything from preoccupation with personal mortality and conflicts with authority to flagrant sexual indiscretions. Such results are not intended to be a checklist of reactions to the midlife transition against which a woman religious should evaluate her personal experiences. She might be able to relate to all of the symptoms or to very few. Owning what is personally hers is the challenge of growth.

The universality of adult transitions is always underscored by the uniqueness of the individuals

experiencing them, and to lose sight of individuality is to deny the qualitative differences of human growth and development. Much of the literature on midlife is an exaggerated reaction to a glaring gap in the understanding of adulthood. Knowing that all pendula eventually swing back to center, it is safe to assume that the contemporary overemphasis on midlife symptoms will soon evolve toward a more measured, in-depth understanding of that dynamic life process.

Women religious living with midlifers in transition often wonder what they can do to help their distressed sisters. Unfortunately, no foolproof list of suggestions is available. Midlife transition is not a disease about which something can be done. No activities, pat phrases, or specific reactions can facilitate resolution of the internal turmoil. This is frustrating for the woman in transition as well as for those who must live with and/or observe her. Ours is a fix-it society that does not easily tolerate delayed gratification or sustained discomfort. We have been raised with a medical model that assumes that we can list complaints, formulate diagnoses, and prescribe cures whether we are dealing with our physical health or a rattle in the car. Such immediacy in so many areas of life overflows into adult developmental discomforts when again we desire to know the symptoms so that we can institute the proper procedures prescribed for instant eradication of the disease.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPERS

As a process, the midlife transition requires time and space for its completion. Because truncating the process of interiorization only stifles or frustrates its resolution, easy answers or prescribed solutions ultimately serve deleterious ends. The task for those observing midlife friends in transition is to provide a patient presence—an availability, concern, and willingness to assist without imposition or argument. As much as possible, women religious witnessing their sisters' discomfort should avoid arguing with them or trying to assume responsibility for their friends' feelings and behavior. The greatest gift one sister can give another during this painful time is self and space. This is admittedly more painful and demanding than any schedule of prescriptive activities could ever be, because no definite end is evident, no solution is waiting around the corner. A precious commodity to all people, including women religious, time is the very gift religious can offer their sisters in midlife turmoil.

Community administrators, spiritual directors, counselors, and psychologists also need to appreciate the midlife transition as a process. Insistence on immediate solutions will precipitate more problems if the helping person fails to be circumspect. The midlife religious who is complaining about sexual problems is not always best ad-

Growth is a continuous choice, a repeated "yes" to the planned and unplanned evolution of life events

vised to leave community and pursue marriage. If she is disgruntled with her current occupation, there is no guarantee that she will find satisfaction through a career change. Sorting through the various symptoms to identify internalized identity difficulties is tedious and time-consuming but necessary if the enabling leaders in community and society who work with women and men religious are to provide an atmosphere in which total growth and development can be effected. Too hasty a solution for the initial complaint will only further compound the discomfort of the woman in transition and lead to potentially greater difficulties if she is forced to grapple with problems resulting from being misunderstood. Some midlife sisters do need alternate prayer forms and the freedom to pursue them; others might think they need variety but really need to spend intensive time with one style before experimenting with others. Each religious is unique, living her special time in history through her special personality. Generalized answers to unique complaints or community policies that deny individual differences militate against full actualization of the person.

I went to a counselor two years ago because I was having a terrible time. I was dissatisfied with community, in love with one of the men I worked with, and totally devoid of any prayer life. The counselor had worked quite a bit with others from my community, but I think he really failed with me. He kept encouraging me to leave the convent, insisting that I was obviously interested in marriage because of my dissatisfaction with community and my love of the man I mentioned. I'm glad I didn't follow through with him. I can see in retro-

spect that I was going through something more than a vocation crisis. If I'd left, I'd probably be in a bigger mess today. (age 42 years)

I used to get quite upset with all the sisters who came to me requesting time away from their work for study. They all seemed in such a hurry—and became so upset when I tried to explain that we just didn't have the money for everyone to be studying at the same time. I used to get into arguments with them and took it personally when they didn't understand or when they got angry. Now that I know something about midlife and the behaviors that go with it, I feel much better about my job in personnel. (age 56 years)

Finding it difficult to sustain personal equanimity when bombarded by a steady barrage of midlife emotionality, administrators and counselors might succumb to the temptation to provide instant answers hoping for speedy solutions. Needing and taking space for private reflection so that they do not lose their personal perspectives should certainly be a priority for those who work with midlife religious. Offering instant solutions to presented problems in order to avoid unpleasant emotional reactions does violence to the administrator or counselor as well as to the midlife religious.

A religious resisting midlife transition will feel unsettled and undefined. If she succeeds in avoiding direct confrontation of the issues, she will face them later, probably with greater vehemence, when she has fewer resources for coping because of diminished health and delayed psychological development. Unless she has encapsulated herself in a tomb of total inertia and unconsciousness, the woman religious, like all persons, has a drive to grow mentally healthier and spiritually more mature. A prerequisite to this growth is interiorization, which presses for fulfillment regardless of the individual's preferred life development schedule. Interiorization can be forestalled but never eliminated without a conscious rejection of life and growth.

CHANGE BRINGS BENEFITS

Regardless of its onset and its unique evolution, each midlife transition yields specific benefits to the woman religious who courageously accepts the challenge to actualize herself. It provides a time of personal integration. Selecting a vocation, pursuing a career, developing relationships, and employing talents are all activities of young adulthood when the woman religious strives to establish her place in the world. Through these, she makes a statement about herself that she hopes will be pleasing to others. Needing and wanting to fit in, she pursues others' "shoulds" and "oughts" with the hope that correct behavior will generate acceptance. During midlife transition, the woman challenges herself to assess her activities and behavior to determine what they mean to her in her overall

actualization. To integrate her various experiences into a meaningful whole, she formulates an identity based on past events, present insights, and future aspirations. To internalize her self-description, she reevaluates the litany of demands to which she has subscribed for purposes of acceptance and decides in freedom and responsibility which "shoulds" and "oughts" are essential for her actualization and which are guidelines rather than requirements.

Through her integration, the midlife religious develops a philosophy of life that encompasses her unique lived experience and her future vision. Before this time, she looked outside herself—to her church, her family, her community, and her work—for a definition of who she was and what she was about. Through midlife interiorization, she determines for herself what she is about and fashions an understanding of her existence that she can embrace as she anticipates the second half of her life.

Confronting herself in her existential loneliness at the core of her being, facing her God and her ultimate meaning in life, she accepts her identity and her spirituality as completely her own. Rather than setting her apart from others, developing an individualized philosophy of life now bonds her even more closely to others who have also formulated theirs. In the same way each religious learns what it means to become most uniquely herself, she also learns that in her human individuality she is most like other persons.

Plunging into the difficult questions of purpose and being, the midlife religious honestly assesses her strengths and weaknesses and sets reasonable goals based on her discoveries. In her youth, she believed that she had no faults and could accomplish anything. As she aged, she acknowledged weaknesses but persisted in her belief that she could overcome them with sufficient work and willpower. By midlife transition, the woman religious accepts both her strengths and her weaknesses, still committed to conquering her limitations but understanding that she carries them with her always. Although not complacently rejecting efforts to improve herself, she realizes that her weaknesses have contributed as much as her strengths to her identity as a person.

Prior to midlife, the woman religious expended considerable time and energy denying and fighting her inner foes, fearing them and struggling to tame them. Through honest midlife assessment of strengths and weaknesses, she can name her enemies and know them for what they are. No longer denying this intrinsic part of her identity, she incorporates her understanding of herself, both her positive and negative qualities, in planning her future life as she employs enriched self-knowledge for more practical setting and adjustment of goals.

The midlife transition allows the woman religious to accept herself as being in the process of becoming. So much of her youth was dedicated to

Facing her God and her ultimate meaning in life, she accepts her identity and her spirituality as completely her own

shaping herself into an ideal, finished product of perfection. Because she could not always comprehend the value of the journey itself, and to hasten her metamorphosis, she eagerly rejected those aspects of herself that violated her ideal, hence violating a growth dynamic. Through midlife interiorization, the woman religious learns that she participates in reality by progressing toward an ideal and that an essential component of that reality is imperfection seeking to correct itself. Recognizing imperfection helps to establish goals. It acknowledges that the God in me and the God in you and the God beyond both are evolving and weaving the tapestry of process and becoming. Before midlife, the woman religious espoused a world and life view that was static and formed the finished ideal. Through midlife, she learns that the process of moving toward the ideal is itself alive, vibrant, and worthwhile. She chooses life, complete with finished textures and workable flaws.

ACCEPTANCE AND REALISM

Personal acceptance generates inner peace. No longer struggling for instant elimination of imperfections, flaws, and limitations, she relaxes in the identity that is hers. She does not regret the activities and emotional involvements of her youth because she realizes they were essential for her actualization. At the same time she understands that she does not have to expend as much energy changing the world while emoting over her successes and failures. Knowing that her time is limited, she establishes manageable goals prioritized through her vision and personality. She modifies her "messiah complex," ceases berating herself for

ups and downs, and adopts schedules and commitments that take into account both strengths and weaknesses. However, she does not recline on an easy chair of contentment and rock away the rest of her days. On the contrary, she returns to her life with even greater dedication and enthusiasm; but she tempers both with more realistic demands and expectations.

Individuation leads to greater acceptance of life and of others. From her cumulative experiences, the midlife religious learns that certain goals cannot be forced and various projects cannot be rushed. As a result of her deepened sense of identity and personal responsibility, she is freer to let others be free. In her youth she wanted herself and others to conform to specific styles of doing and being. Just as she can no longer hold herself to these externally imposed demands, she also accepts that she can no longer hold others to them either. The midlife religious knows that growth occurs with and through others, not by them or because of them.

I wanted all my students to act and think the way I did. I struggled, agonized, berated, and pleaded toward that end. Ridiculous. Some think the way I do; others won't. I still give it my best shot, but I am no longer destroyed when the result deviates from what I had in mind. (age 39 years)

I would really like it if we could all get along in our house because the tensions are sometimes too much to live with. I used to think that I could make all of us understand one another, but I guess that's a little unrealistic. I can do my part to lessen the tensions, but I can't force the others if they aren't interested. (age 48 years)

I went through years of being angry with my parents because of the way they raised me. They're much older now; and even though I wanted things to be different, I understand they did the best they could. (age 40 years)

Inner peace, personal acceptance, realistic goal setting, and personal integration generate greater contemplative skills and rewards. Learning through her struggles that life can always be appreciated more deeply and lived more fully, the religious is freer to allow the wonder of life to unfold before her. She discovers that she can improve her prayer not by storming the gates but by sitting quietly with the God within, waiting to see what her God will show and listening to what her God will say.

The rewards of peace, integration, and contemplation do not preclude interest and activity in daily events, nor do they prevent any further frustrations in her life. Many religious emerge from their transitional experiences involved in the same jobs they have always held, pursuing the same relationships they have always treasured, and delighting in the same hobbies they have always enjoyed. Some persist in traditional prayer forms or

Sixty percent reported experiencing a personality change, and the most frequently reported age bracket for this change was 35 to 40 years

continue to espouse long-held beliefs. The changes are not so much quantitative as they are qualitative; and even if nothing has changed in her external behavior, the midlife religious who has resolved her transition knows that she is different and senses a significant alteration in her identity and motivation. From a tremendous storehouse of cumulative life experiences, she can draw wisdom and insight, and she does not hesitate to do so. She has learned from personal successes and failures what she can honestly pursue in the time she has left.

Just as the inception of the midlife transition occurs gradually, beyond the immediate consciousness of the woman religious, so does its resolution. She gradually realizes that her good days outnumber the bad and that her pleasant feelings are more prevalent than unpleasant ones. Enjoying an inner peace that pervades her activities and perceptions, she is aware that something significant

has occurred, that she is different but the same, more whole yet still fragmented.

SOME CHANGE REMARKABLY

The sisters participating in the midlife study were asked if they felt they had experienced a significant personality transformation. Sixty percent of the respondents reported experiencing what they considered to be a personality change, and the most frequently reported age bracket for this change was 35 to 40 years. Some felt they had come to a greater acceptance of themselves as persons, with more understanding of themselves and more willingness to live with themselves. Others reported experiencing a radical personality difference in which characteristics never displayed before began to emerge.

I used to be the life of the party, always ready with a joke or a light remark to entertain. You would never know that now. I'm content to just sit and listen. (age 45 years)

I used to be very shy, waiting for others to speak up first. Now I seem to have an opinion on everything and insist on announcing it to everyone. (age 41 years)

I never dreamed I could give workshops—I could never get up in front of people and talk without shaking to death. I gave my first workshop last summer. I was calm and it was good. (age 48 years)

Growth is dynamic, ongoing, changing, evolving. Adult life cycles, while relatively new in the study of human growth and development, are emerging as periods of continuous assessment and reevaluation. Perceptions change and deepen; behaviors intensify and diminish. Each step in the growth process is a learning experience effecting greater actualization of the woman religious as she fashions her journey of becoming. Experiencing transition, suffering through insights, and allowing for change and evolution are painful but necessary stages in the human growth process. The midlife journey, like all adult transitions, is a beautiful opportunity, a gift, through which deeper appreciation and richer insights of God in process emerge.

DEALING WITH A POOR SELF-IMAGE

GERALD R. GROSH, S.J., and WILLIAM E. CREED, S.J.

Many people view themselves as less than adequate persons. Many have a low opinion of themselves and judge themselves to be inferior. Teenagers fall short of their ideals; mothers and fathers judge themselves to be less than they could be as parents; priests and religious have low self-esteem; and the elderly consider themselves useless. These attitudes represent a denial of the christian truth that each person is good and created in the image of God. Dealing with a poor self-image is a crucial step in the process of personal growth. For most people, it is the crucial step into the realm of faith and religious experience.

Life in the realm of faith means being called to a personal relationship with God. As a personal relationship with God develops, each person gains a sense of uniqueness and worth before the Lord and before others. This call means that a person has passed through other stages of development, including gratification of individualistic needs, excessive dependence on peer approval, and blind conformity to social customs and laws. These are ordinary states of development that all pass through in becoming an adult. But hidden beneath the ordinary stages of development, for most people, is an innate dislike of self because of the inability to measure up to an idealized self-image.

Revelation manifested in the Bible states that God has created us good and that God loves us as we are. A key task in life is to believe this and, as a result, to love others freely. A major hindrance to this belief is a poor self-image.

This article will delineate the process by which a spiritual director can help a person to grow through religious experience to recognize his or her own goodness and to initiate an individual relationship with God and with others. The article is divided into two parts: (1) a description of persons with a poor self-image, and how this affects their image of God and their manner of coping with choices and (2) the director's role in facilitation of growth toward a healthy self-image.

PERSON WITH A POOR SELF-IMAGE

Sense of Self. Persons with a poor self-image feel hemmed in and pressed down by structure. They do not feel good, and they complain of being needy or dependent, of feeling guilty, and of doing nothing right. Feelings of inferiority often erupt into anger, and at times loneliness becomes overwhelming and pours over into self-pity. They wish they could be free of these feelings and could have inner peace. Instead, they often put themselves down and dwell

THE CHOICE FOR PERSONS WITH A POOR SELF-IMAGE



TRYING TO EARN THE LOVE OF OTHERS

AND



THE FACT THAT OTHERS LOVE
THEM FOR WHO THEY ARE

on the negative. Because of a lot of "shoulds" in their life, they feel they can never measure up. They tend to constantly look to others, make comparisons, and judge that those others are better. Such individuals fall short of personal expectations by focusing on their own behavior rather than on who they are, and their behavior never measures up to their expectations.

Sense of God and Prayer. To the person with a poor self-image, God is often a judge, a policeman, or a punisher who controls the universe and "poor little me." God is withdrawn and sets standards that cannot possibly be met. The person is wary of God, since God is experienced as untrustworthy because sin is permitted in one's life. Despite constant efforts to please him, God never seems satisfied. There is no warmth in the person's relationship with God, because God is someone to be feared and kept at a distance.

The person with a poor self-image does not have a sense of self to entrust to the Lord. Running away from living and from praying in the here and now, this individual prefers to dwell either on the past and its failures or on a feared future. Time in prayer is spent wrestling in the mind, debunking positive experience, and skipping over possible open doors to positive experience in prayer. Such prayer often takes the form of an interior monologue.

The Experience of Choice. The challenge before

persons with a poor self-image is to become a true self. Self-acceptance is craved at the deepest level. What this means is not exactly known to these persons, but the present situation is intolerable to them. Very often they have placed incredible demands upon themselves, demands that they cannot meet, demands that generate feelings of inadequacy. These people gradually realize that it is time to let go of the impossible expectations both self-imposed and imposed by others. Positive voices toward growth and negative voices toward stagnation surface at this time. St. Ignatius refers to these as various "spirits," and he stresses the importance of discerning "good and evil spirits."

The biggest "negative voices" are discouragement and hopelessness. In this state a person is easily given to self-pity and discouragement, to blaming others for feelings of worthlessness. Persons with a poor self-image fear true self exposure. If they are young, they are more likely to put on a false front, trying to bolster a lack of self-esteem with false accomplishments. If older or in a morose mood, these persons are more apt to detail every fault. Because they have so little sense of self, they will try to find out what others think and do in order to copy their ideas and behavior, often asking what specific actions are appropriate. Fearing failure and striving to stay within established boundaries, these individuals admit a lack of know-how:

of how to perform, to relate, and to pray. They run from the here and now to dwell especially on the past, where they recall experiencing failure.

The real choice for persons with a poor self-image is to stop trying to earn others' love and to accept the fact that others love them for who they are. With this realization these persons begin to let go of impossible ideals, to ignore the negative voices, and to trust successful experiences of a loved and loving self. Gradually they begin to see themselves as persons who are limited yet gifted and unique.

DIRECTOR'S FACILITATION OF GROWTH

A major role of the director involves listening for the movement of the Holy Spirit calling individuals into relationship with the Lord. Usually the call of the Lord is toward acceptance of self as good and unique. The director gently guides the person to look at and listen to the Lord's unconditional acceptance and total love.

Much of the director's efforts will be spent helping persons to discover a true self and to claim that selfhood. A listening and accepting stance is very important. Openness and freedom in the manner of the director will be a healthy model for the directee and will ease his or her articulation of self-understanding. The director's capacity to cherish the directee and to offer a model of the Lord's acceptance is also crucial. It is helpful to search out the good, to speak to "life" in the person, and to encourage the directee to move with that life.

The director should be attentive to images that occur in the directee's consciousness, especially images of life. Frequently something in nature—a tree, a rock, a bird, or an insect—will speak to the person with a poor self-image. The director encourages the person to go with the flow of life.

The director will unmask the destructive voices and inclinations for what they are. Here, one becomes a teacher, pointing out what the person dislikes yet chooses, observing interior attitudes that continue to weigh the person down, noting the high ideals and the tendency to focus on his or her negative aspects.

As the person begins to distinguish between impulses leading to greater negativity and death and those impulses leading to greater freedom and life within, the director can help him or her to associate God with the latter and the absence of God with the former. Helping the person to focus upon the Lord, while looking beyond disliked parts of the self, is constructive. Here the director shifts from teacher to guide, leading directees to a knowledge and experience of the true God. As they grow in self-knowledge, the realization dawns that they are wonderfully made and are trustworthy as persons.

The directee is encouraged to listen to the Lord and his words. "I forget the past and am doing something new. . . . You are precious in my sight; I love you" (Isaiah 43). "The love I speak to you

Feelings of inferiority often erupt into anger, and at times loneliness becomes overwhelming and pours over into self-pity

about is not your love for God but God's love for you first. . . ." (I John 4). God becomes one who loves unconditionally. God's presence is desired and attractive, soothing the soul. The director invites the person to savor the words and the love within. The person begins to trust this new God as someone who lavishes good things on the beloved.

The director also encourages directees to be kind to themselves by not judging themselves negatively and by taking time to revel in and enjoy life. In all, the director communicates his or her respect for them and suggests ways in which they can gain a sense of dignity. Directors may encourage them to achieve some success at sports, at work, or by helping others. They help them dwell on and savor the good experiences. Often, persons with a poor self-image are accustomed to putting themselves down with vague generalities or comparisons with others. In helping them to be specific, directors will encourage their directees to look back on individual past experiences and to claim the good in each experience. They will help them to see and appreciate personal talents and will help them to talk about their feelings and to become aware of their inner life in detail.

The director facilitates changes in attitudes or behaviors that are not life-giving. Some directees may be encouraged to reach out and initiate new relationships or to deepen old ones, especially those from which the person has already derived some positive self-regard. Others will decide to commit themselves to personal growth by recording inner experiences in a journal and talking about themselves more openly and honestly with the director or a close friend.

God wants only that they be a true self and not some idealized image of the self

Spiritual directors challenge their directees to be human in relationships as well as in prayer. They will suggest that the directee's feelings, both positive and negative, be brought into relationship with the Lord as well as with others. Directors will call persons to live in the present, to state their present feelings and attitudes. At first, when encountering a directee's many fears and worries about the past or the future, directors will discover their patience is stretched as they direct the person to tell them and the Lord how he/she feels about the past or the future. Directors encourage their directees to make choices that lead to life. These choices include respecting one's body by taking physical exercise or wearing better clothing and choosing to do what

one enjoys or is successful at. The director helps the person realize that God wants life and joy for him or her.

The director encourages directees to expand their image of God and the scope of God's love, as well as their understanding of prayer. Walking in the woods can be prayer. Choosing life can be prayer. Choosing not to move with negative impulses can be prayer.

Letting go of images of God as judge or punisher and accepting the Lord's love and mercy may be a point of tension for persons with a poor self-image. Slowly, they experience the full acceptance of the Lord. God wants only that they be a true self and not some idealized image of the self.

Directors take very seriously God's meeting the persons and loving them in the present moment. Their efforts are to help them to be real, thereby to realize their goodness and loveliness. This realization comes when the person with a poor self-image stops trying to earn love and opens the self to accept God's love in each life experience.

CONCLUSION

Growth toward self-acceptance and belief in the Lord's unique love for oneself are key steps in the process of becoming free to live as a christian. The process involves facing one's own poor image of oneself, an ordinary step in the process of human growth. Spiritual directors must stand with the person in the face of that negativity. At times the person's self-rejection or self-hate is so deep that referral for psychiatric help will be appropriate. However, whether a directee is receiving professional counseling or not, God still beckons the person into relationship. A spiritual director can be very helpful in facilitating relationships with God and with others that enhance the person's sense of a loving, developing, gifted self that is fashioned in God's own image and likeness.

Mysticism for a New Age

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM JOHNSTON, S. J.

Father Johnston was working in the Philippines, at the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Novaliches, near Manila, when this interview was taped. This widely known author, professor, lecturer, and spiritual director graciously interrupted his writing schedule and instruction of Jesuit tertians and novices to talk about some of the issues related to contemplative or mystical prayer that we thought would be of most interest to the readers of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. He is one of the world's leading authorities on the relationship between Eastern and Western types of mysticism.

HD: Father Johnston, what kind of ministry has brought you here to the Philippines?

Johnston: I'm working as part of a team of three spiritual directors for Jesuit tertians who, like myself, have come here to experience a Third World country. Our session here will last about seven months.

HD: Your usual work is teaching, isn't it?

Johnston: Yes, it is. I've been a member of the faculty at Sophia University in Tokyo since 1960.

HD: That's when you first came to Japan from Ireland?

Johnston: No, I went there originally in 1951 to study the Japanese language and then theology.

HD: What aspect of theology did you specialize in?

Johnston: I did my doctoral work at Sophia in mystical theology. I wrote my thesis on the classic *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It was later published as a book under the title of *The Mysticism of The Cloud of Unknowing*.

HD: How did you happen to get interested in mysticism?

Johnston: In the late 1940s, when I was studying philosophy in Ireland, a professor of mine, Father John Hyde, introduced me to the ideas of St. John of the Cross. Later, in Japan, Father Antonio Evangelista, the rector of our school of theology, put me in touch with the writing of St. Teresa of Avila; and Father Hugo Lasalle (whose Japanese name is Eroniya) provided my first contact with Zen.

HD: How did you discover *The Cloud of Unknowing*?

Johnston: I just happened to pick it up in a bookstore in Tokyo one day; I started reading it and

found that I resonated with every word. I felt it was John of the Cross in simpler language, even though it was written in English in the fourteenth century, two hundred years before John of the Cross lived. *The Cloud* let me see that John of the Cross was by no means an original writer. He was just a Spanish mystic carrying on a tradition that goes back much further.

HD: And Teresa of Avila did the same?

Johnston: Not quite; she was different. She lacked the theological background reflected in the writings of St. John of the Cross and *The Cloud of Unknowing*. She wrote more directly from her own experience.

HD: Who else drew your interest toward mysticism?

Johnston: Strangely enough, Aristotle did. In his *Ethics* he wrote about the *theoria*, the great intuition of happiness. His experience struck me as being mystical, something like the Zen *satori*, or *enlightenment*, that Father Lasalle introduced me to.

HD: What was it about Zen that appealed to you?

Johnston: In mysticism there's a kind of prayer without too many words. You enter into silence, into emptiness, into nothingness—the void. And in Zen you find something parallel. I'm not saying that they are the same, but they are similar: wordless meditation, silence, and so on.

HD: How were you initiated into Zen?

Johnston: Father Lasalle brought me with him to a *sesshin*, a Zen retreat that lasted seven days. You sit for nine or ten hours each day in the lotus posture; I wasn't ready for it. It was also very cold there, and the food was poor. But I was beginning to learn from Zen that prayer is a matter not only of the mind but also of the body. This is a practice that is common to Yoga in India and Zen in Japan: you pray not just with your mind but also with your body, your breathing, and your sitting, and you don't need many words. But the marathon sitting was too much for me then, and it's almost too much for me even now.

HD: You've never gotten used to it?

Johnston: I haven't; it calls for too much endurance. So I just don't sit for very long periods of time. I prefer to spend a few hours at meditation, then work for a while, then meditate some more—thus integrating my prayer very closely with my work throughout the day.

HD: You mentioned Zen in connection with Yoga. Are they usually thought to be closely related?

Johnston: It's often said that Zen originated in South China near Canton and that it emerged from the meeting of Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism.

**Some people say you
could be a Buddhist and
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I don't think so**

That's probably true, but it's also clear that Yoga exerted an influence—in the lotus posture, the sitting and breathing, and so on.

HD: After that difficult retreat, what did you do next?

Johnston: While continuing to learn through dialogue with Zen, I kept my roots in the gospel, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and John of the Cross. The dialogue consisted of meeting with Zen persons, explaining what I as a christian believed, then listening to what they believed. There was no obligation to adopt any beliefs: I just explained the way I pray and understand God, and they talked about their conviction. That was the "official" dialogue that Vatican II encouraged. But I began to realize that even without getting together with people around a table, as a result of living in Japan I was unconsciously engaged in dialogue all the time—holding an inner conversation with Buddhism, reading books about Buddhism, and soaking in the atmosphere of Buddhism that pervades that country.

HD: Who set up the "official" dialogue sessions?

Johnston: A committee of christians and Buddhists. It was initiated about 1965 by a well-known Quaker, Douglas Steere. He set it up so that Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, and others could meet. We did this for a week every year, and we've continued for more than 15 years now, with occasional substitutions among the participants.

HD: What have you learned through this dialogue?

Johnston: Particularly, that there's a tremendous commitment in Zen. Buddhists recite "I put my trust in the Buddha; I put my trust in the *dharma*; I put my trust in the *sangha*." Putting one's trust in the Buddha doesn't refer just to the historical Buddha; it refers to the real self, the true self. The *dharma* is the Buddhist scriptures, and the *sangha* is the Buddhist community. It all adds up to a total and radical commitment. As a parallel, a christian could say, "I put my trust in Jesus Christ; I put my trust in the gospel; I put my trust in the church, the community." You can see how dialogue is possible. Some people say you could be a Buddhist and a christian at the same time. I don't think so; I think the commitment is different, despite the fact that sitting in meditation, breathing, and so on may be much the same.

HD: Have you seen any Buddhists converted to christianity or vice versa as a result of your dialogue?

Johnston: No, I haven't seen any; but of course the aim of dialogue is not to make converts, it's to share. What I have seen is Buddhists learning a lot about Christ and christianity and coming to reverence Christ without making a commitment. I also see christians learning a lot about Buddhism and integrating Buddhist methods of meditation into their own christian prayer.

HD: Does Buddhism place a great deal of emphasis on the life and deeds of the original Buddha in the same way that christians reflect on the teaching and actions of Jesus?

Johnston: Not much at all. In one of our dialogues one of the christians asked, "Supposing there were proof that Shakya Muni (the Buddha) didn't exist, what would happen?" The Buddhists said it wouldn't make any difference to them. We christians, however, replied that if it were established that Jesus never existed, our faith would collapse totally. In other words, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is crucial to christianity, whereas Buddha needs no historical incarnation.

HD: Was it Zen or mysticism that captured your interest at Sophia?

Johnston: Mysticism gradually became my principal interest, but I'm grateful to Zen for enabling me to see the importance of symbolism in prayer. The type of prayer I practice now and try to teach is just "sitting with a symbol." At first I thought Zen was just sitting and breathing with nothingness. That's what they tell you—just sit and breathe. But then I began to realize that the nothingness is itself a symbol. The nothingness, the emptiness, the breathing are all symbols. The Zen temple is also full of symbols. I've learned from Zen to engage in a form of christian prayer that amounts to just sitting in the lotus posture with a symbol; for me the main

one is the Eucharist. I just sit with the Eucharist in front of the tabernacle.

HD: You recommend the lotus posture?

Johnston: Not necessarily. You can just sit. It's a form of prayer that christians have been doing for centuries, unwittingly. One thing I began to recognize is the centrality of the monstrance that holds the host. It embodies a tremendous symbol, the circle. In Sanskrit it is called the *mandala*.

HD: It sounds as if you are recommending the form of worship that occurs during the traditional Catholic ceremony we call Benediction.

Johnston: By all means. I know some theologians downgrade the monstrance and the ceremony, saying, "You don't see Jesus anyhow"; but they are overlooking the dynamics of religious experience that arise from the circular form of the Eucharistic symbol. Through looking at this symbol with faith in the Real Presence, one is carried to the deeper levels of consciousness, that is, mystic awareness.

HD: How did you discover that?

Johnston: By doing it, then reflecting on the experience, and finally realizing that it's an awareness that's already a part of the christian tradition. Teilhard de Chardin had tremendous devotion to the monstrance and wrote beautifully about it. Buddhists, on the other hand, sit and look at the mandala as a cosmic symbol and find themselves drawn into deeper levels of awareness and what they call cosmic consciousness.

HD: What other symbols have impressed you?

Johnston: First of all it was nothingness and emptiness, then the crucifix, and then Mary, the mother of Jesus—either visualizing her as present or just holding your rosary beads. I see now that you can sit with any symbol.

HD: Does sitting with a symbol involve a certain kind of intellectual activity?

Johnston: No, just a certain presence to the symbol, not a thinking about the symbol.

HD: You just let the symbol work on you?

Johnston: That's it. And, with the help of God's grace, it provokes a deep experience. But there's another side to all of this. When you sit with a symbol—the monstrance, tabernacle, crucifix, Mary—there will also come up from your unconscious distractions—fears, anger, sexual feelings, and the like—that have been repressed up to this moment. These sooner or later emerge and result in a strange mixture of peace and turmoil. Some spiritual people have written about fighting against such distractions and pushing things back into the unconscious. Buddhists do this by repeatedly reciting the word *mu*, which means "nothing," while attending to their breathing. But I believe it's bet-

Christian contemplative writers say the devil is like a chained dog: he can bark, but if you don't get involved, he can do you no harm

ter to let these things surface at the conscious level and to accept them—the anger, the sexual feelings, and all. Just accept them as part of yourself and let them pass without clinging to them. This can be a very healing and purifying experience.

HD: Isn't the same feeling likely to arise every time you return to the same symbol?

Johnston: That's going to happen until a certain degree of purification has been achieved. There is a special word for this process in Buddhism: *makyo*—illusion. In Buddhist temples you see a picture of the Buddha sitting in the lotus posture, absolutely serene. He's bathed in celestial light, and his face is beautiful. All around him you see wild animals, snakes and seductive women, but he's just sitting and paying no attention to them. They represent the world of temptation, and the message is that you should pay no attention to it. Just let it be and it will vanish. You pass through it without getting involved with it on your way to enlightenment. Christian contemplative writers say something similar when they describe the devil as being like a chained dog. He can bark, but if you don't get involved, he can do you no harm. In *The Cloud of Unknowing* it is said that when you move deeply into a mystical life, you see the beauty of God and your own ugliness. I see now what that means. I believe it's what Carl Jung is speaking about when he says that we at times become aware of our own shadow.

HD: Are you saying that while contemplating a symbol, elements of a person's shadow repeatedly emerge, but if no attention is paid to them, they are eventually washed away?

Johnston: Not exactly. The shadow side of human nature doesn't go away. As John of the Cross says while describing the "night of the senses," tendencies toward the seven deadly sins are going to manifest themselves in all of us. These are what purification eventually eradicates, if their presence is ignored each time they surface during contemplative prayer. John of the Cross's second night, the "night of faith," is quite different. Instead of being faced with my own little ugliness, I'm now confronted with a cosmic reality, the evil in the world and all the suffering in it—what Jesus saw in Gethsemane. That's why I feel it's not fair to say that contemplative people are running away from the suffering of the world, from social problems, and so on. If they go really deeply into contemplation, they're facing these problems in another dimension.

HD: Do contemplative persons need to nourish their minds with up-to-date information about the current state of the world?

Johnston: Not necessarily. They don't need television or newspapers; there is suffering enough in their own life to instruct them about the world. But when I refer to the suffering of the world in relation to contemplation, I'm not just talking about poverty, hunger, and that sort of issue. The worst suffering of all is experienced by people who have no faith and no hope, and who feel utterly lost—not lost after death, but lost *now*. Many contemplatives are suffering with them and for them, and are not at all out of touch with them and the world—again, like Jesus in Gethsemane.

HD: Then you believe that an important role is being played in the church today by contemplatives such as the Carthusians, Cistercians, Trappists, Carmelites, and the like?

Johnston: I certainly do. They render an incomparable service to humanity.

HD: Have your books been written principally for contemplatives?

Johnston: They are intended for anyone who is interested in contemplation or mysticism. I wrote my first one, *The Mysticism of The Cloud of Unknowing*, to clarify the Thomistic theological background of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, which was a practical book on the art of spiritual direction. Thomas Merton, whom I met in the United States, wrote the preface for me.

HD: What did you write after that?

Johnston: *The Still Point* and then *Silent Music: The Science of Meditation*. I wrote these because I was becoming aware that people all over the world

were desirous of learning to contemplate. Reading taught me this, and I saw foreigners coming to Japan from places as distant as Germany, Australia, and America in order to learn Zen. Many stayed in Japan for a while and then moved on to India. I'm especially interested in writing for people who practice contemplation and want to know more about how to do it. I've been deeply impressed by the enthusiasm for prayer manifested by the many people who have been attending my summer courses at the University of San Francisco. These include both men and women, and priests as well as brothers and women religious.

HD: How old are these, generally?

Johnston: They are usually over 35. Younger people learn more quickly how to sit, because they are more elastic; but when it comes to the experience, I think older people are better prepared for it. Again, I think Jung was right when he was writing about the mandala, symbolism, and the middle period of life. He recognized that at about age 35 a change takes place, and—if I understand him correctly—that people become more contemplative then. The earlier period of life is devoted more to achievement, but a development of one's spirituality is more characteristic of the second half of life.

HD: What other writers impressed you?

Johnston: Teilhard de Chardin and Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan's method of reflection on self and what happens within oneself has intrigued me, along with his concept of unrestricted love in connection with religious experience. I've found his book *Second Collection* very helpful.

HD: Do you agree with Jung that the Western psyche is quite different from the Eastern?

Johnston: Jung saw that Western people are often not ready to face the "shadow side" of their own unconscious. I believe he was right: Westerners are generally not ready to move through darkness. And he makes a valid point when he says that Yoga is tied to a philosophy of nonviolence, of not stealing, of chastity, and so on. Westerners try to divorce the practice of Yoga from this philosophy of life. They want to use the power it unleashes, even for destructive purposes. He's right; it's true. But I would add that if you want to practice either Zen or Yoga, you need a faith to go with it, either a Buddhist faith or a Christian faith; these shouldn't be tried in a vacuum. Unfortunately, that's what many Western people have attempted to do, and a number of them have broken down into emotional illness as a result of doing so.

HD: Is it important for contemplatives to keep reading the gospel?

Johnston: It certainly is. Even though during the time of meditation you sit with a symbol like emp-

teness or nothingness, what you read outside the time of prayer is going into your unconscious and is very important. I came to see the significance of the scriptures in Buddhism too. Some people think that Zen is all emptiness and nothingness, but in fact, when you go to the Zen temple and observe Buddhists there outside the time of meditation, you see them constantly reciting their scriptures, the *sutras*. This sinks the symbols deeply into their unconscious.

HD: When a Christian reads the Christian scriptures and then begins to pray, what happens?

Johnston: There are two possibilities. One is that you don't even need to think about what you have read; you just sit and look at a symbol, such as the Eucharist. The other is that you take some ideas or events from the scripture and reflect on them.

HD: With reference to the first of these, would you call it *prayer* if you were to sit before a symbol—for example, a painting in an art gallery—and just look at it?

Johnston: There's a difference. When the Christian looks at the eucharistic symbol, faith, love, and commitment are included. That's what makes it prayer and no longer a technique. I remember going back to Dublin after being in Japan and visiting a church that was full of people just sitting there. Some were saying their rosary; some, I'm sure, were praying for their spouse or children; but others were just sitting silently with the tabernacle symbol. I remember thinking on that occasion, as I do now, that there has been much more contemplation and mysticism in the Catholic Church than we have ever realized.

HD: Do you find that the "sitting with a symbol" type of prayer changes people?

Johnston: It does. I see them grow. This happens through the experience that Buddhists would call an enlightenment (*satori*), but Christians usually term *metanoia*, a change of heart. These are not exactly the same, but human religious consciousness is the same everywhere, and both transform the person. I'm not saying that it's not possible just to sit there like a zombie, doing nothing and wasting your time. Zen people are aware of the possibility of false mysticism too. In authentic experience, however, there is awareness of reality, of the presence of God, along with what is called "one-pointedness," a concentration on God, Jesus, Mary, or any chosen symbol. People who engage regularly in this type of meditation, I find, eventually show real signs of growth in love.

HD: How can you measure this growth in love?

Johnston: Just look for an increase in the "fruits of the Holy Spirit": charity, joy, peace, patience, and so on.

I think the trap in the social apostolate is anger, and this kind of prayer is a way to cope with anger

HD: Some people meditate by sitting and concentrating on their rhythmic breathing with no thought of God. Do you see them changing?

Johnston: I know a number of people who say this has helped them improve their tennis or golf game, or their "human potential." And at times I've seen the dimension of religious faith gradually enter in. It's as if they have grown closer, or been drawn closer, to God by this route.

HD: Does it make any difference whether a person meditates alone or in a group?

Johnston: I think at the beginning it's better for a person to meditate in a group. I really believe—scientists might disagree—that there are certain vibrations generated by the members of a group. You can sense the group concentration; this is a powerful help. But there are also times in people's lives when they want to be alone. I respect that wish. Let them meditate then in solitude. Jesus himself sometimes climbed a mountain and spent the night alone in prayer, but at other times—as at the Last Supper—he prayed with his disciples. So both situations are valuable. I feel, however, that even when one prays alone, one should be in contact with a community.

HD: Why is that important?

Johnston: A community provides support. The contribution is difficult to describe. As an example, there are times when you participate in a week-long retreat where you're surrounded by other people but don't speak one word to them. You don't even look at them, you're just sitting among them;

but at the end there's a feeling of union, of rapport, that is quite extraordinary.

HD: Is the type of meditation you teach useful for people engaged in an active social ministry?

Johnston: It certainly can be. It can help a person become aware of the pain in the world. When I was in India I saw beggars and poverty and suffering; my first inclination was to get away. I didn't want to see these things because they made me feel guilty. But then I began to realize that in prayer I could be present to this suffering all around me. I couldn't do anything about it, which caused me to feel an even greater distress, but I was able to allow myself to experience compassion, to suffer with those people. Just being present can be a great prayer. I also think that for people who work in the social apostolate and are in the middle of a situation where there is great injustice, there is a temptation to become angry and then violent, and possibly wind up doing more harm than good. But if one can be present to such a situation and sit in meditation, aware of the injustice, it can be agonizing as the anger arises, but in a while the anger is transformed into love for justice and can be channeled into efforts to solve the problems at hand.

I think the trap in the social apostolate is anger, and this kind of prayer is a way to cope with anger. It doesn't abolish it. (It's appropriate anger and shouldn't be abolished.) This style of prayer purifies it.

HD: Would you say that contemplative or mystical prayer is for everyone?

Johnston: In the old days we used to tell people that contemplative prayer was for later in life and that people who wanted to learn to pray should begin discursively by using their imagination, memory, understanding, and will. Those of us working as spiritual directors were advised not to talk much about mystical prayer; though if people arrived there by themselves, that would be fine. Now I think we're in a new age. I think what Alvin Toffler has written in *Future Shock* and *The Third Wave* is true. We're in an age that I believe is moving toward contemplative practices. Young people are learning right from the start how to sit, to breathe, to be quiet, to recite the Jesus Prayer. They can be taught to relish the words of scripture, just turning them over softly in their minds, and then being silent. This simple kind of contemplative prayer can be introduced right away to anyone who wants to learn it.

HD: What's the advantage of paying attention to the body and involving it in such meditation?

Johnston: God made the body as well as the spirit, so when we adore him or are in relationship with him, we should involve not just our spirit but also our whole body. In fact, it's the body that is going

to be transformed at the time of our resurrection. This total involvement is something very christian. It begins to transform the body even now.

HD: In what way?

Johnston: People who pray this way, including Buddhists, seem to know how to walk, how to sit, how to breathe. There's very often a certain peace about the body, an interior tranquility, an inner authority. All these things are there, but they're not easy to describe.

HD: They seem to be present in yourself, Father Johnston—a brightness in your facial expression, an alertness, a calmness. And there's a reflectiveness I detect in you that I don't see in a lot of people I know who are religious. So I think I have some sense of what you're saying. But how could our readers find in your writings an introduction to the ways the body, breathing, silence, and the scriptures can be used along with symbols in contemplative prayer?

Johnston: I'd recommend starting with *The Mirror Mind*, then a shorter book called *Christian Zen*, the second edition of which has an epilogue I think might prove interesting. Later I'd suggest *The Inner Eye of Love*. It's about the mystical life as a journey, putting it into the context of the life cycle psychologists talk so much about.

HD: Are you writing at the present time?

Johnston: After spending six months in Jerusalem last year, I felt the time had come to investigate the unique dimension of christian mysticism and to explore its distinctive features. That's what I'm writing about now. I'm not quite sure about the title, but the subtitle will be *The Way of Christian Mysticism*.

HD: One final question: What is the most striking thing you've learned during your years in Japan?

Johnston: As a kid I had learned that prayer is the raising of the mind and the heart to God, and this is true. But from the East I learned that prayer is not only a matter of the mind and heart; it also involves the body, breathing, and the whole person. Buddhists would say that if you want to learn meditation you must learn how to eat and how to fast, how to sleep and how to watch, how to breathe, how to sit, and how to relax. All this is very important. Furthermore, if you make a real commitment to a life of prayer, your life-style will change—not only your eating, sleeping, and breathing, but even your clothing. With a commitment to prayer will also come commitment to a poor and simple life-style. In other words, we in the West often view prayer as a part of our lives, whereas Buddhists ask for a total commitment. We can learn a lot from them.

THE SHOUT

JAMES TORRENS, S.J., Ph.D.

Baby Joe squalling
Mama yelling downstairs
Benny shooting the cat off his bed
Mary Kate in her room with the Rolling Stones full blast
Murphy wisecracking out his window to a girl friend
Aunt Bertha scolding about the bathroom
Papa coming home, standing in the front door,
Hollering, "What's all the awful noise?"
Everybody shouting in the shouting house.

Saturday, volume up high.
Bicycles get the dog in a stew
Aunt Bertha bawls out delivery boys
The strap is at work on Benny
Papa's irate: "Murphy, where did you put those keys?"
Baby Joe throws toys all over his room
Mama has Mary Kate locked in and arguing
Outcries, a crash, doors slamming, feet on the run
Every sound of shouting from the shouting house.

Sunday, the blessed pause.
T.V. is off
The hound has curled up in the yard
Benny puts on his good behavior
Baby Joe beams from his sister's arms
Aunt Bertha swallows her growls
Mama wears her face smooth as a pond
Murphy stands with his arm hooked in his mother's
Papa gets the car purring in the garage
Away they go
Reprieve
Not a breath of shouting from the shouting house.

I lived next door to the shouting house for a year and a half in Tuskegee, Alabama, and met its family members weekly at church. It exercised a kind of horrible fascination upon me, as well as tickling my funny bone. My own younger days were mostly without household turbulence, except for times when I infringed upon my younger brother and he

defended himself. Nothing all-out and consistent. So the place next door seemed human (quite human, in fact) in a way I was unfamiliar with. Since then a fair number of people have told me, upon hearing the poem read, "Yes, we lived next to the same house," or "That's our house you were writing about."

Why my renewed fascination with this episode of a dozen years ago? Because we have come upon days, alas, when the central subject is aggressivity and the ways of defusing, or socializing, or harnessing it. Right handling of aggressivity is a matter of life or death, not just for individuals walking the city streets, but for the human family as a whole.

Erich Fromm holds to a distinction between aggressivity and what he calls self-assertion; the latter, which he says has nothing to do with wounding people, is proper, for example, to the male in his sexual role and in fact to anyone "moving forward toward a goal without undue hesitation, doubt, or fear" (*The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973]). This distinction between the bruiser, one who relishes attacking, and the normal feisty person is quite appropriate and necessary. Still, Fromm seems to presuppose a pre-Newtonian state of things, where no galling is caused by bodies moving forward to a legitimate goal. Both biology and psychology are more likely to speak of self-assertion and aggressivity as closely, if uneasily, bound. The dynamics seem to have some measure of suffering built in.

Konrad Lorenz then seems right, that the aggressive instinct is inseparable from our animal origins and vital in some way to everyone, even within the most intimate human bonds. To contain and integrate the aggressive drive within a bond of friendship is, as he points out in *On Aggression*, quite difficult in today's overcrowded and acquisitive conditions. Yet the unleashing of it, anarchy leading to a kind of social meltdown, is an alternative all too familiar in our century and not to be entertained for a minute. Lorenz, speaking unfavor-

INGHOUSE

ably of most contemporary forms of competition, does make an exception for sports, with its strict rules, elicitation of heroics, arbiters (they above all), and cross-team friendships. Yet sports too, unleashing militant enthusiasm, can cater to the worst in us.

Lorenz affirmed that reason and moral responsibility first came into the world with humans, to keep wildness in control; but he seems to speak more justly when he shows how wonderful is the intelligence already at work in nature, in the restraints that shield animals of the same species from abuse of their own weaponry. Energy and control, impulse and direction were meant to be coordinates from the start of animal life. We have warped the collaboration in many ways, ready as we are to fabricate images of enemies to hate. What a paradox we present, Lorenz exclaims.

The only being capable of dedicating himself to the very highest moral and ethical values requires for this purpose a phylogenetically adapted mechanism of behavior whose animal properties bring with them the danger that he will kill his brother, convinced that he is doing so in the interests of these very same high values. Ecce homo! (p. 274)

Rollo May contributed much to our understanding of explosive human energies with his category of the 'daimon', as explained in two central chapters of *Love and Will*. Though the concept of daimon, stressing as it does our natural tie with the divine, seems to point in an opposite direction from Lorenz, upward rather than backward to animal origins, it gives us a great deal of insight into aggressiveness. For the daimon is, by definition, a generative impulse, the urge "in every being to affirm itself, assert itself, perpetuate and increase itself" (p. 123). The assertion can be blind and devastating; Dante's *Inferno* teems with images of the daimonic gone awry. On the other hand, it can also carry us to "impossible" heights of creativity, public achievement, and the passionate attach-

ment that is "strong as death" (*Canticles* 8, 6).

The daimonic, our aggressive side, in May's sobering evaluation, tends to defy control, burst limits, have us at its mercy. What a blow to our narcissism it is, says he. Yet it does not cancel our free will, and we are pathetic without it. Repression is convenient to religions, classrooms, domestic settings, industrial life, civil society; "but we cannot avoid the toll of apathy and the tendency toward later explosion which such repression brings in its wake" (p. 123).

The repressed stage is well described by Joyce Carol Oates in a vignette from one of her stories: "She was sweet and apologetic, as always, as she had been all her life, nervously backing away from the arguments she should have had with my father, turning aside from the talks she should have had with me" (quoted in *Harbrace College Handbook*). One of the troubling insights of modern psychology is that often, in a person such as the above, aggression goes underground. The ignoble and hurtful form it assumes is called passive aggression, where people taking a silent and apparently meek stance are in reality resistant, manipulative, and revengeful. It has wreaked havoc in religious life, to say nothing of marriages. Far better the ability to slug it out.

As I think of people slugging it out, I wonder now, years later, what has become of the members of the shouting house, how they have bestowed their loves, what callings they have followed and how effectively, what insights they have come to about themselves, how well they can now compose differences, how happily they move amongst people. I hope that as they look out with adult awareness upon the naked force that has been rampant in the world since the days of *The Iliad* (cf. Simone Weil's astonishing essay "*The Iliad*, or The Poem of Force") they do not lose heart. I hope above all that the gospel, framing its call to love often in terms of confrontation, endurance, and strong resolve, still today and now more than ever gives them heart.

USING DREAMS IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

JAIME FILELLA, S.J., Ph.D.

Everyone dreams—every night and generally several times a night. Some people spend as much as one fifth of their sleep time dreaming. Many dream in vivid color; a few have dreams within a dream. Although a universal phenomenon, in practically all cases a dream will have specific personal meaning. Anything that has affected us in depth is likely to emerge, symbolized in appropriate imagery, in our dreams. Dreams can tell us about our spiritual life, and they can be a useful tool for spiritual direction.

Since dreaming is so common and so central in a person's life, it is difficult to understand the reluctance with which dreams have been put to use in spiritual direction. It is even harder to explain why some people regard them as sources of deception, when one of the most decisive happenings in the early church—an event that paved the way for its cultural liberation from Judaism and eventually led to the acknowledgement of its universality—was Peter's and Cornelius's coordinated dreams (Acts 10).

Actually, dreams have not enjoyed a good image among spiritual writers and spiritual directors. Superstitious, occult, and irrational elements as-

sociated with dreams and their interpretation may explain the reason for this reticence and caution. Even Pedro Meseguer, whose book *The Secret of Dreams* did so much to foster an appreciation of the value of dreams, recommends their use for spiritual direction only "in exceptional cases for proportionately good reasons." Nevertheless, dreams do contain valuable information that, with proper study and interpretation, can help us to understand how we are faring in our spiritual growth.

Before analyzing dreams for spiritual purposes, we need a general frame of reference for dream study and analysis. I will present in this article two models of human growth, one from the spiritual point of view and another from the psychological, and then some dreams with analysis.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH MODEL

From a variety of sources, I have elaborated a model of spiritual growth, keeping in mind the experiential and developmental aspects of the process. The five stages mentioned here are tentative and need greater precision. Each stage contains two phases: (1) a quickened, *revolutionary* phase, in

which an event of short duration but great impact provokes a reaction in the subject or directee, upsetting and even shattering the subject's established mode of life, and (2) a second, *evolutionary* phase, in which the subject goes through a gradual process of assimilation that helps him/her to come to terms with the radical change induced in the revolutionary phase.

Growth takes place as a result of a pressing-releasing cycle, in which the subject's experience is exposed to heightened stimulation for growth, then to a period of abatement that allows assimilation of new elements in the process. The model assumes that God reaches out to the subject, confronts him/her with the existence of the divine, engulfs the subject in it, then draws him/her into his life. My conceptualization includes five stages, each with its revolutionary and evolutionary phase:

Stage I. Phase I (revolutionary): God's insertion. The life of the person is touched by God. Subsequent events begin to acquire and to be lived in a new dimension, the spiritual dimension circumscribed by God's presence.

Phase II (evolutionary): Search and wonder. The subject now acknowledges God's presence and embarks on a new process of self-observation and reflection on the implications of this presence.

Stage II. Phase I: Explosion. God's presence is gentle but uncompromising. God must be dealt with as God is, not as in the subject's image of God. Often this entails an eradication of old concepts of God and replacement of them with the experience of God as God wants to be seen.

Phase II: Ordering. The revision of one's concept of God means a major reorganization of one's value system, attitudes, and opinions. Everything is seen in a new light.

Stage III. Phase I: Implosion. Being anchored in God soon means being outflanked by God on all sides, similar to a state of siege. The subject finds God's presence with its natural consequences everywhere, sometimes feeling more like an unforeseen obstacle and invitation to reform than an enjoyed relationship.

Phase II: From loneliness to solitude. A process of total redefinition of self begins. It is often a long, dreary journey, plagued with a sense of futility and meaninglessness, leading frequently into several blind alleys. The process may be compared with a state of learned spiritual helplessness, but perseverance leads from accepted loneliness to fruitful solitude.

Stage IV. Phase I: Re-centering. The ability to enjoy solitude paves the way for a new mode of experiencing God's intervention as God becomes the center of the subject's life.

Phase II: Contemplation. A new dimension in the faith experience is introduced when the subject learns to let go in matters of spiritual life, while remaining very active and in control of ordinary life.

Actually, dreams have not enjoyed a good image among spiritual writers and spiritual directors

Stage V. Phase I: Assumed in God. The subject begins to walk on a new path, the mystical way. God acts on the subject from the center of existence, and the subject must learn to be carried spiritually by God.

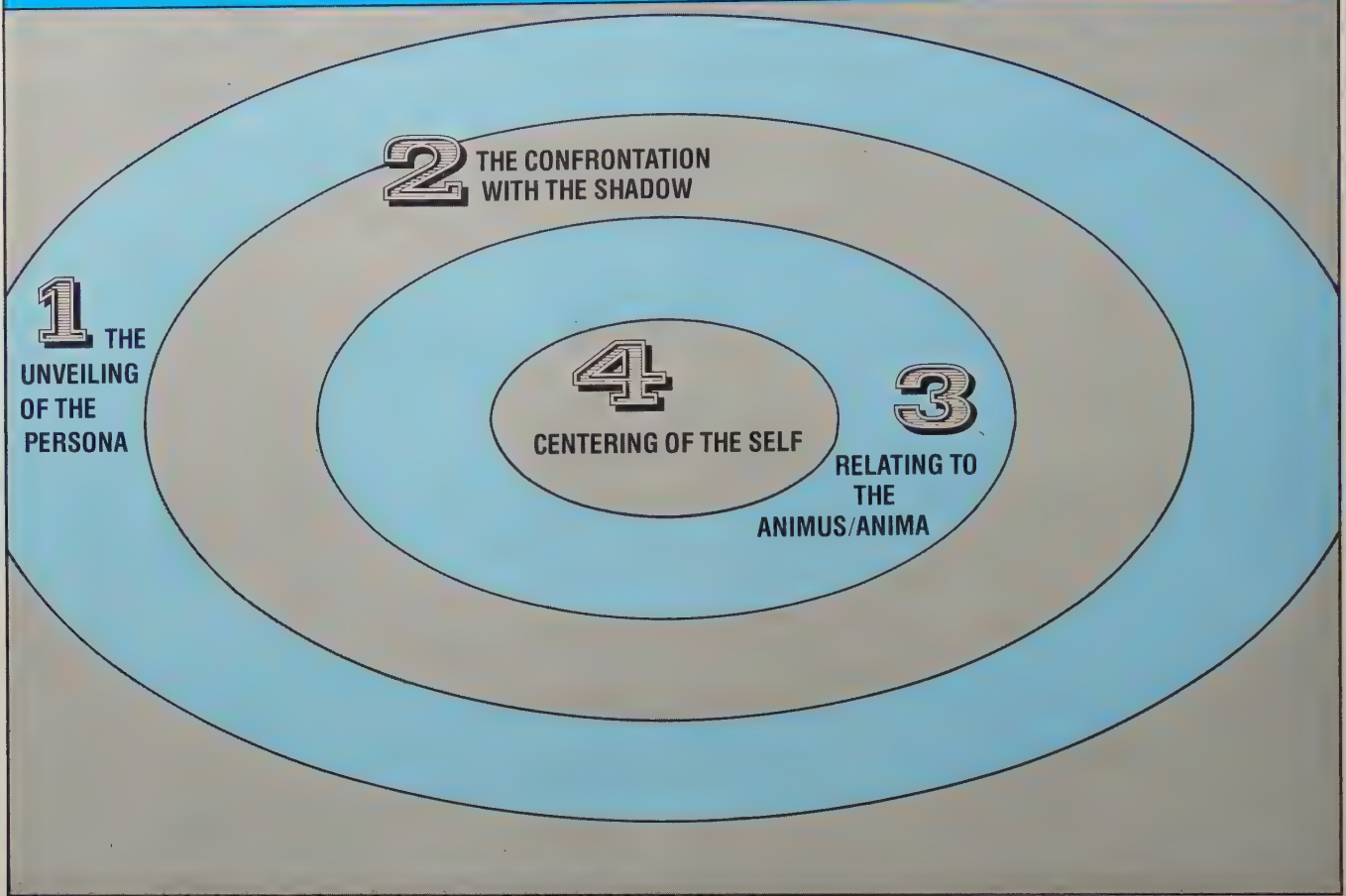
Phase II: Lived union with God. Through recollection and quiet, the subject begins to view and experience everything in life with divine wisdom. The subject learns to live the reality of human society as a preparation for life in God's own society.

This brief outline of a model of spiritual awakening and growth will provide a frame of reference within which dreams can be interpreted. The following model of psychological growth will prove helpful for the same reason.

PSYCHOLOGICAL GROWTH MODEL

Psychological processes take place side by side with growth in the spiritual life. From among the many models of growth in the professional literature, Piaget and Erikson provide two of the most significant and best known models, but they are not readily transferable to dream imagery. A theory that comes closer to our concern is Jung's approach to the process of *individuation*. Individuation is a gradual growth toward human maturity and freedom that charts the transition from an ego-centered mode of consciousness of oneself in the world to a self-anchored experience of oneself in the world. The ego stage in the individuation model is characterized by an outward expansion of awareness through acquisition of new elements from the environment. The ego stage of development means gaining greater control over what surrounds us,

JUNG'S STAGES IN THE INDIVIDUATION PROCESS



achieving more and more, and safeguarding our position and status. Over against the ego is the self, concerned with things of an entirely different nature: inner peace, harmony, balance, integration, strength, and confidence.

According to Jung, the path that leads from ego-dominated concerns to self-initiated motives is a process containing the following stages:

1. The Unveiling of the Persona. The persona is that aspect of our personality approved of by society. Its activities are dictated by the desire to keep up appearances and to impress others. The unveiling of the persona means the process during which one has over-identified oneself with the expectations of society about one's social roles and comes to the realization that the persona must be unmasked, thus shedding overdependence on social roles. The unveiling of the persona involves exposing one's superficial artificiality in order to relinquish it as humanly unviable and deceptive. It is the first step toward individuation.

2. The Confrontation with the Shadow. Coming to terms with the reality of one's life means facing the seamy side of one's personality, or "shadow" in Jung's terms. More precisely, the shadow represents the socially nonfunctioning or nonfunctional aspects of the personality. Facing one's shadow is an unsettling experience, and Jung explains this natural fear as the consequence of our negative attitude toward this frightening part of our real self. Individuation requires that we come to terms with these negated elements of our personality, accepting them as real and eventually cherishing them as our own.

3. Relating to the Animus/Anima. This stage is more complex than previous stages. Up to this point, two aspects of the ego were involved with different degrees of awareness: the persona was the accepted and socially reaffirmed aspect of ourselves; the shadow represented the negated parts of our consciousness. When some measure of integration has been achieved between them, we enter into

a new type of experience by sensing what was latent within ourselves but never expressed.

This third stage in the process of growth involves familiarization with the potential of our total humanness. Jung explains that by identifying with our sex roles, some aspects of our humanness have been easily allowed to express themselves, whereas others have been forced to remain latent in the unconscious. In males, the animus represents psychic energy expressed through sex roles as men, whereas the anima harbors the unexpressed feminine part of the psyche. Conversely, for women, the animus is the unexpressed part of their psyche and the anima is expressed. In the third stage of growth, human beings come to face themselves as androgenous, or psychologically bisexual. Through this integration and unification the fourth stage of individuation can take place. For Jung, this enlargement of one's personality by the inclusion of what was latent in the psyche is not so much a confrontation as a communication with an existing source of energy. It is the unfolding of a complementary aspect of oneself, hitherto unrecognized. This growth in awareness leads to an expansion of experience and signals the beginning of true autonomy.

4. Centering of the Self. The final stage in the individuation process is the realization of the self as the center of harmony and integration. It includes what is both conscious and unconscious in an individual. Jung has called the self "our life's goal, for it is the completest expression of that fateful combination we call individuality." The emergence of the self brings about a re-centering of one's psychic structure, where neither the conscious nor the unconscious prevails. The self organizes the whole functioning of the psyche by integrating all the forces that impinge upon a person in a concretely individualized manner. Individuation is the achievement of completeness.

The advantage of this psychological model is that it affirms a person's gradual growth toward a responsible integration of all that is human, with an implied openness to the transcendent. In addition, Jung's model is explicitly related to a theory of fantasizing and of symbolic expression through myths, drawings, and dreams. It provides a basis for dream analysis that will strengthen our tentative insights by further probing and careful checking. Jung's approach is a good starting point, even for those who do not want to follow him very closely. It gives sufficient inspiration to get one started and places enough emphasis on personal direction to leave anyone free to go about dream interpretation based on personal insights.

EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO DREAMS

Dreams are assumed to be expressions of experience. Properly understood, they tell much of what goes on in the subject, including progress toward

Coming to terms with the reality of one's life means facing the seamy side of one's personality

maturity, level of functioning, and degree of internal integration. But what can they tell us about spiritual growth? And what can they reveal about the specific obstacles a person is experiencing in the course of spiritual development?

Meseguer says that dreams can be: (1) a source of temptation, (2) a problem of moral responsibility, (3) a source of information about the state of the soul, (4) a source of instruction, and (5) a source of energy. An experiential approach to dreams through their *symbolic* expression makes the first two issues (dreams as sources of temptation and as problems of moral responsibility) marginal or accidental to the real nature of dreams. The other functions (informative, instructive, and energizing) can be subsumed under the symbolic nature of dreams. Dreams, as symbolic expressions of experience, contain representations of both blocked energy and the clues to its being blocked. This is the most important principle of an experiential approach to dreams. As such, dreams instruct us and tell us much about the state of the soul and about the potential energy being blocked in the dreamer.

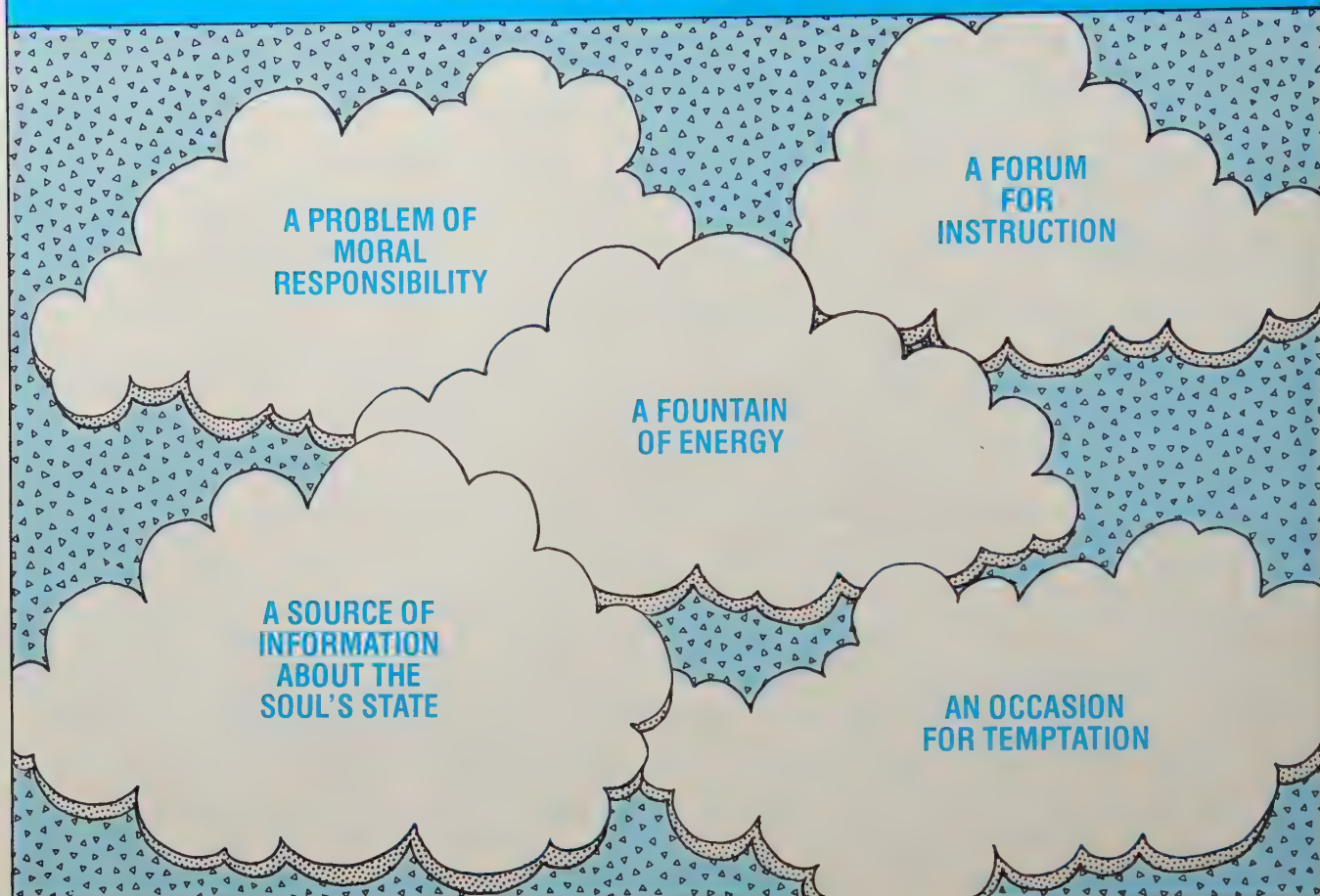
More specifically, dreams can shed light on the following points:

1. The degree of integration achieved by an individual in all the major factors, including spiritual factors, influencing growth toward individuation at a given period of time;

2. The hidden sources of unused energy in the subject, sources untapped or fearfully and timidly dealt with;

3. The stresses and strains, troubles, conflicts, and challenges a person is facing that subtly but forcefully indicate what blockages are at work;

MESEGUER'S VIEW OF DREAMS



4. The significance, quality, and direction of some events in the subject's progress toward psychological maturity and how far spiritual growth is integrated into this process; and

5. The effects of unusual interventions within the person and the psychological/spiritual repercussions of such interventions.

This article does not address the problem of whether God can directly communicate with us in dreams. To ascertain the validity of such an occurrence one should first eliminate the possibility that the event be explained in some natural way.

DREAM ANALYSIS IN DIRECTION

Many approaches to dream analysis are highly sophisticated and belong in the repertoire of psychoanalysts. Properly used, they offer help in delving deep into the unconscious and unearthing much that may be of significance. We need not go as deep in spiritual guidance. Neither need we discard all

dream material as too esoteric and totally beyond our ken. The following categories are useful to consider during dream analysis in nontherapeutic situations like directed retreats, training programs, workshops, spiritual direction, or counseling.

1. *The dreamer.* Age, sex, professional work, and any specific information relevant to the type of problems, conflicts, ambitions, and plans that are significant at the present moment.

2. *Specific dream elements.* Objects, animals, events, and persons that can be easily recognized or readily identified with, as well as the significance of such elements via associations (i.e., relationships within the mind).

3. *Dream roles.* The roles played by specific dream elements.

4. *Intriguing aspect.* What is the most intriguing element or aspect of the dream?

5. *Dream message.* What seems to come through, and what is the feeling with which it comes through?

6. *The ending.* How does the dream end—natural-

ly, unfinished, truncated, smoothed over? Does the dream build on a previous one? Does the theme of the dream keep repeating itself through various images or events? Are there any additional insights coming from the interpretation of other, apparently unrelated dreams? Are there any convergent or divergent themes in the subject's dreams?

EXAMPLES OF ANALYSIS AND DIRECTION

I want to offer a few examples of dreams and their possible interpretation. The dreams presented here were explained either orally or in writing by the dreamers themselves. Their analysis was the result of the combined efforts of the dreamer and myself until we felt we had gone deep enough to get the light we needed at the time. They are presented without any claim of finality in the scope and depth of their interpretation; in some cases, the analysis went deeper than reported here. I offer them as examples of the experiential approach, using some dreams with clear contextual features to suggest a forthright interpretation and others that are heavily symbolic. None of the dreams were from people who had undergone therapy or were in need of it.

DREAM 1: A HOUSE WITH NO FOUNDATION

I am sitting in an easy chair in the upper floor of a two story bungalow. I am satisfied, I have worked hard, and I am resting on the upper floor where I can look around at green, lush, bright, clear vegetation all around me. It is a tropical country, and beyond lies the jungle. I get up from the chair and look out from the balcony. Suddenly I realize there is no ground floor. I am terrified and wonder how I will get out, how I can be standing on the upper floor if there is no first floor. I awake frightened, bathed in perspiration.

Analysis. The dreamer is a 38-year-old sister, a missionary with 20 years in religious life. For five years she has been principal of a school in the middle of a modern city. The school is doing very well as an educational institution. The religious community serving the school is made up of eight sisters who are hard-working, but quite independent in their work, with cooperation and communication among them at a low ebb. The dreamer has never fully mastered the language of the place and wonders whether she belongs there. The dream occurred on the fourth day of her eight-day directed retreat.

Dream elements. Nothing can be contextually identified except the dreamer herself. The rest is symbolic with special meanings for her. She identifies the upper floor of the house as her school where she feels quite at home and can relax. The green wall of lush vegetation and the jungle beyond is the culture, customs, and language of the country where she lives and which she does not fully understand. Her relaxed mood inside the house is indicative of

What can dreams tell us about spiritual growth and about the obstacles a person is experiencing in spiritual development?

her having given up learning the language. Bolting from her chair is associated with the occasional awareness that ignorance of language and culture is not appropriate for a missionary.

Dream roles and intriguing aspect. The contributing element, an observer and active agent, is closely related to the roles of other dream elements. The intriguing aspect is her realization that she is on the upper floor with no ground floor to support her. She sees fearfully that she is disconnected from the culture around her and her sisters in the community.

Dream message. Can one be a missionary in isolation?

Dream ending. The dream ends abruptly, but her feelings and mood in the dream connect with her conscious sense of disorientation and dissatisfaction.

Comments. This sister's experience correlates with the search and wonder stage referred to earlier in the spiritual growth model. Before the retreat she seemed to have settled into an orderly life, but in her own world. During the first three days of the retreat, she complained of lack of interest and complete blankness in prayer. In general her health was not good, but she was dedicated, hardworking, and conscientious. During the retreat she started praying about her spiritual crisis. The dream released a store of energy related to fright at her present situation and her need to change, to relate, and to see things moving in a different direction. As a result of the retreat, she asked for a year's sabbatical so that after three months in her home country, she could come back and dedicate several months

to the study of the language of her missionary country and to the process of inculturation. Energy was blocked with regard to relationships, and a possible cause of the blockage was withdrawal through hard work.

DREAM 2: JOURNEY TO THE BASEMENT

I am in the graveyard of my novitiate, a well-kept 13th century Cistercian monastery. A small, dark room is underground, where the remnants of exhumed bones are kept. It is twilight, and I am afraid. The stone covering the underground chamber has been pushed aside. Inside I can see a ladder, a door, and the floor, which is flooded with three feet of greenish, dirty water. In the chamber below I can see small, well-kept alabaster caskets with the names of deceased priests and brothers.

I look around the dark chamber, barely lit, standing on a rung of the ladder just above the dirty water. I hear myself mutter, "Why do you look around? It is gone." Then I am not afraid. "It is gone," I repeat to myself.

Analysis. The dreamer is a 52-year-old priest with 33 years in religious life. He is professionally very dedicated and competent, in great demand for lectures because of two or three successful books he has written. He is concerned about his public image, both as a religious/priest and as a professional. His religious life is sincere but lacks depth. He is faithful to his major obligations but remiss about "minutiae" like daily regular prayer and complete recitation of the breviary. He has abandoned all forms of pious practices, and he defines himself as very progressive in his thinking but conservative in his behavior.

Dream elements. All persons and parts of the dream are easily identified. The time being set back to the novitiate seems to suggest strong symbolic meaning in the dream elements.

Dream roles. The dreamer is an observer-actor, looking inside, walking down the ladder, looking around, speaking to himself. The inner underground chamber is perceived as his novitiate days and all that he was taught at that time. The dark, the twilight, and the brackish water are seen as indicative of something abandoned, such as his religious practices of the rosary or novenas.

Intriguing aspect. The change of mood is from fright to becoming less afraid and then to a familiar, safe feeling. He says, "It is gone." What is gone? The fear? What was learned in the novitiate?

Dream message. The dream possibly contains a warning against excessive liberation from religious practices.

Dream ending. The dream ends with a note of acceptance of present reality, though some perplexity remains.

Comments. This priest seemed sincere, committed, and hardworking. There are some elements of persona, in the Jungian sense of the socially acceptable

facade, that are still very much with him, including his image before others and his image as a faithful religious as measured by novitiate rules and standards. Because of his "liberation" much of his novitiate experience has become disconnected from his daily life and has been pushed into the unconscious where it has begun to stagnate and become inoperative in his life. His fear that it may be inoperative brings him to confront it in his dream as the fearful symbol of the graveyard. He faces up to his fear, looking at it steadily and unflinchingly, but at a distance. His fear melts and leads to acceptance of the reality of his present religious life in both its positive and negative aspects. He accepts the novitiate as a part of his life, but psychologically he lives by something else. He was facing the question of whether this something else was more or less meaningful (from the religious point of view) than his novitiate experience. From the Jungian perspective, his dream was pointing to a transition from the persona-shadow stage to the animus/anima stage. In our spiritual growth model, he seems to have been at that time in the stages of implosion and growth in loneliness toward solitude. Blocked energy centered on the genuineness of his commitment, and a possible cause of the blockage was ambivalence about how to give concrete expression to his religious commitment.

DREAM 3: THE THRILL OF VICTORY

I am in a competition, a partner event like rowing a boat, but our faces are down sometimes, like in swimming. I am surprised to find myself in the competition because I know I am not good at it. So, aware of my inadequacy, I lean heavily on my partner, a man. At first he seems chagrined by the fact that I can't do it, but I encourage him, placing complete confidence in him.

We get off to a good start. It is an event that requires strength in the arms. At one point, an enormous ski jump appears off a high place into the water below. I am afraid we will not make it, since I've never done it before, but we land easily and smoothly. I am surprised, relieved, and delighted. After landing I lose a ski, and we are held up a bit as I recover it. He waits patiently. We've gone from swimming-boating to skiing. Although our winning the event was unthinkable at the beginning, we held our own and won. More important, I held my own, yet leaned on him when I needed to.

Analysis. The dreamer is a 48-year-old sister with 27 years in religious life, teaching at a college in India. At the time of the dream, she was attending a five-day seminar on Jungian psychology with some of her philosophy students from the college. She was particularly struck by the concepts of psychic energy and the archetypes of animus/anima. She found them similar to some Indian Tantra concepts. She is not a sportswoman, but because of her position in the college she deals with students who engage in sports. In relation to the anima/animus,

Dreams are not irrational—they should not be left exclusively to the expert interpretation of psychoanalysts

she said she had “done a lot of looking to others in this area, wanting a man to protect me, take care of me, and meet my emotional needs, but always ending in total frustration.” She described it as blocking a great deal of psychic energy.

Dream elements. The context is completely symbolic, since nothing in the dream resembled her real context. While recounting the dream, she stressed her surprise at being in a sporting event. Sports could be associated with her desire to prove her strength, her capacity, and her need to succeed. The presence of the partner suggests her need for a man to protect her. His surprise at her needing him relates to her being a nun yet needing a man for protection. The man’s ready acceptance of his role as a trustworthy, understanding protector suggests her complete trust in his capacity to understand her need. The turbulence of the river and the danger of the ski jump are reminders of her chequered life as a religious and possible signs of her shadow.

Dream roles. Her male partner in the dream serves a supporting role, as well as showing her how new things are to be done. Understanding, patient, and dependable, he leads and supports but never becomes too demanding. He can be easily associated with Jesus.

Intriguing aspect. The racing event is surprising, especially the transition from swimming to boating and then to skiing. The event suggests a transition from a strenuous manner of moving through the water to an effortless flying through the air. She proceeds in the dream from feelings of inadequacy to trust and surrender in joy.

Dream message. She no longer needs to be inappropriately dependent on others to fulfill her needs. The power is within her.

Dream ending. It is very smooth and natural, a quiet but exhilarating achievement.

Comments: The dreamer is quite clear that this dream came as a clue to her habit of looking to others to fulfill her needs without realizing that power for self-affirmation was within her. She equates the inexplicable context of an athletic event with the grace of her vocation: something beyond her strength, power, and imagining. The dream presented an actualization of something she had always put into words, that the strength and power of Jesus within was available for her. Her stage is a move toward selfhood transcended by the presence of Jesus (re-centering), who challenges her to the task of living her vocation in a dynamic, powerful way.

CONCLUSIONS

I am personally convinced that dreams help clarify some attitudes and psychological reactions, most of them unconscious but activated by the deliberate determination to take spiritual life seriously. Dreams are potential tools for psychological and spiritual understanding. They are not irrational or so esoteric that they should be left exclusively to the expert interpretation of psychoanalysts. As long as one is clear about one’s own limitations and goes tentatively about one’s approach to dream analysis, much can be learned from the use of dreams for spiritual direction.

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CELIBACY'S HOLY LONELINESS



REVEREND KEVIN CODD

A musement is the usual reaction of Catholic religious to the portrayal of their profession in the mass media, as well it should be. Writers, directors, and producers of our popular entertainment seem to find it a very difficult task to capture in any but a distorted way the figure of a religious woman or man. Most often, we are depicted as piously stupid do-gooders from another age bumbling about in a modern world that has passed us by. These characters are comic and deserve a good laugh, even from those who know them to be only the most shallow reflection of what our life is really like. But after a half-hour of viewing M*A*S*H's Father Mulcahy, frustration sets in; one can't help but think, "I'm a priest, and I don't act like *that!*" Seldom has the entertainment industry provided its consumers with a portrayal of the contemporary priest, monk, or sister about which any of us could say, "Yes, that character reflects the heart of who I am and what my life is about."

The popular media have difficulty depicting the religious person credibly, but this is not because of the overtly ministerial aspect of our lives; dedication to others seems easy enough to portray on celluloid. It is more likely that the reason why people in the entertainment industry fail to portray people of our type seriously is that they do not know what to make of the fact that we are celibate. People who choose to forgo sex, marriage, and family life cannot be dealt with too seriously in a society where such things are taken for granted as essential for human fulfillment. By our own choice, we lack these basics of adult life; hence it is not surprising that the popular media see us as rather archaic and therefore portray us in a one-dimensional manner. They simply do not know what makes us tick. They are at a loss to understand what forces, powers, or feelings inside a person could lead him or her to choose to remain celibate for life. They do not understand how the celibate could ever be as fully

engaged in the adventure of human living, with all its potential for passion, comedy, and even tragedy, as could the "full" man or woman.

ANSWERS LACK DEPTH

The difficulty our entertainment industry has in understanding us and our celibacy is shared by society at large and, even more seriously, by many celibates themselves. Have not most of us often heard ourselves or others bemoan celibacy as an inhumane noose around our necks, a burdensome tool of ecclesial oppression that is little more than a condition for clerical employment? Of course there are others, less given to complaining, who would simply presume that since they live celibacy more or less successfully, they therefore understand celibacy. Nevertheless, to the query "Why do you people stay single anyway?" few would be able to give any more satisfying response than a shrug of the shoulders and "Well, I guess it's so we can be more available to serve our people" or "It's sort of like we're 'married' to the Church." Though such answers offer part of the truth, emphasizing such important aspects of the celibate life as commitment and full-hearted service to others, the psychological, social, and spiritual reality of freely chosen celibacy is much too complex to be fully explained by such responses as these.

Because it touches some of the most basic mysteries of human life, the question of celibacy's potential for meaning is a serious one for all. That the effort to discover and express such meaning is such a confounding task for so many is an important indication that it is a matter of deep personal and existential significance.

Perhaps our initial dissatisfaction with media portrayals of the celibate can be an opening that allows us to take some preliminary steps towards the development of a personally satisfying understanding of celibacy, one that is sufficiently realistic, profound, and true to the emotional, psychological, and spiritual experiences of those who actually live it.

IMAGE NOT REALISTIC

What irritates us most about our public image in films, television, and advertising is the implication that the religious celibate is a nice, lovable, and simple person, but also in some way eccentric, naive, and out of touch with what is really going on in this world. To the contrary, we are aware (often painfully so) that we are as emotionally complex and as open to all of life's grace and loneliness as anyone else. We are not always as innocent and lovable as Father Mulcahy, nor are we somehow exempt from having to face our human need to think, to reflect, to respond to hurt, to love, and to be loved. We escape none of the tortuous ups and downs of life; we too are trying to grow, to live

happily with others, to remain faithful to commitments, and to know when to be close and when to be distant from those who are most a part of our lives. This is what makes us unexceptional as human beings. We are not eccentrics, kooks, or pious-but-irrelevant social misfits. What does make us exceptional in the project of human living is our freely chosen celibacy, which is not a negative decision, a renunciation of what is most human, but rather a positive commitment to live our lives right in the middle of a profoundly human experience—the poverty of loneliness.

If we are at all creative in our celibacy, then we can make it a vocation to know our own deep loneliness as profoundly as possible, to accept it, and to experience it as a powerful occasion of grace. During our lifetime, we are to explore its depths, feel its textures, suffer its harshness, and, we hope, discover within its emptiness an awesome fullness. Quite simply, we become the "experts" on personal loneliness; we take up the challenge of finding in the experience of spiritual, emotional, and psychosexual poverty something of meaning and ultimate importance. If we can communicate what we learn, then our living apart from marriage and family will have served the human community very well indeed. In this possibility lies the potential of our celibate lives to become profound prophetic expressions of a fundamental human truth that might otherwise be lost in the shadowy labyrinths of popular social consciousness. The paramount question to be asked about celibacy is not "What does it mean?" but "How does our celibacy help us to discover what loneliness means?" By serving to reveal something of light in this otherwise dark human experience, our celibate commitment may become the catalyst of hope for all who are lonely. Our celibacy will then take on a pastoral and prophetic significance much more profound than simple "parochial availability."

CELIBACY DEMANDS REFLECTION

Many people desperately fear this restlessness within themselves and therefore avoid confronting it at all costs; they complain bitterly about it, yet at the same time they let its darker side rule their behavior patterns. Many of us religious, needless to say, respond in the same manner; but if we are truly to live our celibacy well, as we desire, we need to reopen our own hearts to its prophetic message.

If we are sensitive to the message of celibacy, we soon make a remarkable discovery: loneliness and love are two sides of the same coin. Like love, loneliness is holy; in fact, love and loneliness are so inextricably intertwined that there can be no understanding of either without reflective experience of both.

The more we human beings love, the more we discover the exasperating limits of our love for one another. Lack of mutuality, infidelity, separation,

We do not have to accept the one-dimensional characters of the popular media as our models and patrons

and death play havoc with our attempts to love, and loneliness is the fruit of our experiences. The more fully we share the deepest and most intimate parts of our souls, the more we also realize that there are yet deeper mysteries in our hearts that can never be spoken to any other person; the self, we discover, is a teeming reservoir of personal identity that can never be fully symbolized and communicated to another. All these experiences lead us to the awareness, for better or for worse, that in this life love can never come to completion on its own. The message of celibate commitment is that it is precisely in our experience of love's limits with its concomitant emptiness, spiritual poverty, and acute loneliness that we are able to feel the initial stirrings of a remarkable fullness. Loneliness opens into an abiding sense of a sublime presence that can only be called love. In proclaiming such a message, our celibate way of living becomes a prophetic sign that witnesses radically to the truth that even in the furthest depths of human loneliness can be discovered the *shekinah* (glory) of God.

If we live our lives with a modicum of joy, we testify—against the popular wisdom of our day—that our own loneliness and everyone's loneliness are holy. From the moment of our first commitment until the day we die, we offer our lives as evidence that even in this most serious poverty of heart we human beings are able to sense with unique purity the birth of God's life within us. Our lives, then, are spent gracing all lonely people with hope—hope that in loneliness, as in death, there will be no more “sting” (1 Corinthians 15:35).

JESUS WAS MODEL

In the search for insight and words to express the manifold meaning of religious celibacy, it is important to be true to the pain that a life without marriage and family causes many religious to feel. But even though our loneliness often makes us restless, makes us wander, makes us feel so very incomplete—not at all like the happily naive Father Mulcahy—we can nevertheless be at peace, work in joy, and know the grace of true love; in our incompleteness we can touch the roots of our life. We do not have to accept the one-dimensional characters of the popular media as our models and patrons. Perhaps the only fitting patron of the celibate man and woman is the Jesus of the Last Supper: profoundly alone, tasting the bitter foreknowledge of death and sensing the horrible incompleteness of his own life, he was yet a man who yearned for a complete love, for a word or gesture that would express to his uncomprehending friends all that welled up in his heart, and who found in his mortal emptiness of soul a closeness to God that would end once and for all the history of misery among his people. As we are to do now, he taught his followers that even in suffering, poverty, and loneliness God is near, his promises are true, and he does not ever abandon his people. Just as Jesus expressed this truth by offering the bread of his body and the wine of his blood to his friends, we celibates are to teach the same message to the peoples of our time by our commitment to live all of our days in the human heartland where both love and loneliness are known as friends.

Celibacy does not simply make us more able to serve our people; it is in itself a profound service to the people of our communities. God uses the celibate life and the tender loneliness it occasions to call his people to the completion of love—himself.

Book Reviews

In A Different Voice, by Carol Gilligan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982. 184 pp. \$15.

Gilligan's important and elegant book, subtitled *Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, aims "to restore in part the missing text of women's development" to that vast body of theory on human development that has all too often been grounded in understandings of male development and in which women are viewed as deficient. In particular, Gilligan has studied the conceptions women have of self and morality in the early adult years.

Gilligan's reflections are centered on her reaction to Kohlberg's classic work on moral development. His theory was derived from a study of 84 boys, and from this he claimed universality for his six-stage sequence. Women, according to Kohlberg, appear deficient in moral development, and their thinking seems to exemplify his stage three, where morality is thought of in interpersonal terms and goodness is equated with helping and pleasing others. In contrast, the higher stages of moral development, toward which men progress, are based first on rules and finally on universal principles of justice.

Gilligan is acutely aware of the paradox of a situation where traits that traditionally have described "goodness" in women (such as their care for the needs of others) are seen as morally deficient. As a result, she sets out to describe a version of moral development that takes seriously development in the lives of women. From this, she derives a description of development significantly different from the one Kohlberg describes. "In this conception," Gilligan states, "the moral problem arises from conflicting responsibilities rather than from

competing rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract. This conception of morality as concerned with the activity of care centers moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships, just as the conception of morality as fairness ties moral development to the understanding of rights and rules."

The ethic of care, which Gilligan outlines from her study of women, is viewed in a developmental sequence of three stages: in the first, the focus is on caring for the self in order to ensure survival; in the second, the good is equated with caring for others; and in the third, one arrives at a new understanding of the interconnection between the other and self. Thus, each transition is marked by a change in one's self-concept, a concept that becomes increasingly differentiated as well as more sophisticated in its understanding of the psychology of human relationships. This ethic of care, Gilligan concludes, "reflects a cumulative knowledge of human relationships [and] revolves around a central insight that self and other are independent."

Gilligan's insights are influenced by the work of Chodorow, who views the earliest stages of the development of gender identity in boys and girls as distinct from one another: masculinity is defined by separation from the mother, femininity by attachment. These different perspectives cause the focus of the lives of males and females to be quite different and the path to maturity to be traveled by separate routes, ultimately leading to the conclusion that there exist two different modes of social experience and interpretation. Gilligan believes that an understanding of the tension that exists between these two modes offers a fuller rendition of the human experience. She concludes, "This dialogue between fairness and care not only provides a better understanding of relations between

the sexes but also gives rise to a more comprehensive portrayal of adult work and family relationships."

Gilligan offers a sensitive and challenging understanding of female moral development and a remarkable contribution to our ongoing discoveries of the intricacies of human development.

—Barbara L. Ruggiero, Ph.D.

Achieving Promises: A Spiritual Guide for the Transitions of Life, by William F. Kraft. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981. 131 pp. \$6.95.

Stage theories explaining adult development have been around for many years, from the observations of Aristotle and Plato to the recent *Passages* of Gail Sheehy and *Seasons of a Man's Life* of Daniel Levinson. What is new is the view of adulthood as a time for progressive changes in behavior, for moving toward more advanced ways of doing things with a fuller realization of the joys and burdens of being human. Recent theories and research are challenging adults to grow in their thinking, moral judgment, social relationships, and religious faith, once considered accomplished by age 21.

For those interested in the relationship between the emotional challenges of adult life and its religious aspects, Evelyn and James Whitehead's *Christian Life Patterns* offered a structured approach proposing Jesus as the model. Their approach was more theological than that of others and was based upon biblical themes to explain transitions. In *Life Maps*, James Fowler treated faith as a universal experience involving believers and nonbelievers and did not equate it with belief in a religion or a god. His approach fits closely with that of Piaget and Kohlberg.

Now William F. Kraft, professor of psychology at Carlow College and a practicing psychotherapist, offers a brief, unimposing but well-written guide to adult spiritual development. He acknowledges the theories of both Erikson and Levinson while making his own five-stage contribution. Treating the spiritual from a viewpoint presuming belief, Kraft writes in a very natural way about God as the Ultimate and about the Holy Spirit emphasizing the love commitment as central to all human development. Although all Christians have heard the strong and heavily theological words of the gospel of John on love, it is stimulating to hear a contemporary psychologist speak so gently and eloquently about the first of all virtues.

Kraft affirms vowed celibacy and the single life as viable and fully human ways of life, while in-

sisting that all are called to lives of love founded upon intimate relationships. He warns people with high achievement needs that their driving urge to excel may cause the loss of the contemplative dimension of life, for the only truly spiritual calls involve the commitment to love and the commitment to one's own death.

Paradoxically, but logically, Kraft sees the person as being able to maintain intimate relationships and at the same time able to accept loneliness as an exalted human state in which contemplation can flourish. Thus, depression and anxiety are viewed as crises of the spiritual life possibly related to John of the Cross's dark night and therefore as potential times for spiritual growth.

This modern ascetic guide is recommended for the person who prays regularly, takes life seriously, and asks the big questions. Kraft's low-key approach invites one on a spiritual journey based on sound psychological principles with the underlying theme being the individual's responsibility for the life of faith. Such a guide would well serve discussion groups in addition to personal retreats involving life reviews.

—Joseph J. Hayden, S.J., Ph.D.

Experiencing Jesus, by John Wijngaards, M.H.M. Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 1981. 176 pp. \$4.95.

One of the major prerequisites for the movement of a religious community from a time of search and darkness to that of creating a transformed community is the personal transformation among a significant number of people in the community. . . . The most striking feature of this metanoia is a new (in the sense of deeper, broader, etc.) relationship to the person of Jesus and the gospel message of the kingdom.

—Cada, Fitz, et al.,
Shaping the Coming Age of Religious Life

Among the many prescriptions for creating a revitalized religious community, none seems more helpful than what Cada, Fitz, et al. (book review, Fall 1981) have suggested and what John Wijngaards describes in *Experiencing Jesus*. Early in his study he points out that Jesus "promised his future disciples a direct experience of himself, so that they will feel they know him better and love him more intensely." This experience will be an interior apprehension of "a very real but spiritual presence recognizable in one's consciousness," causing one's heart to be illumined "so that one notices the difference." There is no question here of a special mystical vision granted to a few; rather, there is something open to all. It is the word of Jesus and

his Spirit, present in the "sacramental realities of the church" and the scriptures, which when accepted and meditated upon, create the awareness of his presence. "To remain in touch with Jesus, we have to absorb scripture," Wijngaards says. Further, as we carry out his word in our lives, we become so filled with his presence that we share in his "radiance," so that our very personality changes. "God speaks to us, as he did to Moses, face to face, and this makes our lives radiant."

After outlining briefly, though with some unction, what the experience of Jesus could be like, Wijngaards presents six saints and mystics who show this experience in their lives: Symeon the New Theologian, Therese of Lisieux, Francis of Assisi, Charles de Foucauld, Teresa of Avila, and Simone Weil. Understandably, none of them provides the unique way to experiencing Jesus, but each manifests some particular insight. Thus, Symeon challenges theology to not lock itself into a merely academic pursuit, but to place the conscious awareness of Christ at the center of christian doctrine. Therese of Lisieux addresses the contemporary angst of loneliness with its temptation to agnosticism by opting for a complete surrender to a God of faith who presents himself in "the hidden face of Jesus." Francis of Assisi downplays the learned knowledge of God's word in favor of an inspired word put into practice, which results in there being felt a sense of the guiding presence of Christ. Charles de Foucauld internalizes gospel texts, and in his meditations experiences God speaking directly to him. Teresa of Avila likewise finds prayer at the center of her life; in its exercise she is taken hold of by God and she experiences him as a close and dear friend. Simone Weil, out of

sympathy with the modern slaves of industrial technology, becomes a captive of Christ and sustains her experience with an intense and attentive praying of the Our Father and with a short love poem of the metaphysical poet George Herbert. These six vignettes have the cumulative effect of supporting Wijngaards's thesis that all are invited to an ongoing experience of the presence of Jesus.

In the third section of his book, perhaps the least satisfying, Wijngaards makes two suggestions as to how to predispose one's self for experiencing Jesus. Though quite ordinary, the means exact effort and fidelity. They are: to set aside some time each day for silence, reflection, and mental prayer, adding to this an extended prayerful retreat; and to internalize scripture by affectively praying those passages which have a personal attraction, noting particularly any images which capture the imagination. A loving response to the passages, and not a mere notional one, is essential.

Although not a comprehensive analysis of religious experience according to the model of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* and more recent scientific studies such as those published by The Religious Experience Research Unit of Manchester College, Oxford, Wijngaards's book is valuable, since it delineates a feasible way of growing in an experience of Jesus Christ. Contemporary christology has given us many fine doctrinal studies of Jesus, and Wijngaards's study complements these with a persuasive summons to develop a deeper awareness of the person of Christ in one's daily life. For anyone interested in effecting the renewal of religious life, this book presents an exciting challenge.

—Charles Reutemann, F.S.C., Ph.D.

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Book-of-the-Year Announcement

The editors of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT take pleasure in announcing the name of the book we have selected for special recognition as winner of our Book-of-the-Year Award. Because of the original contribution it makes to the ministry of fostering human maturity, we have chosen as the most deserving work published in 1982 *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. Based on sound spiritual and psychological principles, the book was written by William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, two of the Jesuits who founded the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Focusing their attention in spiritual direction on the relationship between God and the person, Barry and Connolly aim in their ministry and writing at helping the directee "not so much to understand that relationship better, but to engage in it, to enter into dialogue with God." Their book describes a type of growth facilitation that concentrates on "what happens when a person listens to and responds to a self-communicating God."

Insisting that the basis for all spiritual development is a person's direct experience of God, the authors clearly and profoundly examine the ways in which people providing spiritual direction can understand the relationship and interaction between God and an individual, foster a contemplative attitude, and recognize inner resistances to progress in prayer and direction. They explore, equally helpfully, the various relevant aspects of the relationship between director and directee, disturbances that can impair their collaboration, and the part supervision plays in the training and professional work of the director.

Published by the Seabury Press, New York, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* reflects the fruits of the innovative practice and research conducted by the authors and their colleagues. It deserves to be read by all who are seriously interested in forming directors or improving their own skills. It is a benchmark opus and highly deserving of the recognition we gladly accord it as HUMAN DEVELOPMENT's Book-of-the-Year.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Invitation Extended Again

We are delighted to begin with this current issue our fourth year of publishing HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. To all of our subscribers in 127 different countries throughout the world we are deeply grateful for the encouragement and support given to our efforts thus far. But we want to continue to improve our journal by making it increasingly interesting and useful, particularly to those who are engaged in the work of forming and leading others toward full and effective human, spiritual, and moral maturity.

Without the generous contributions of the many lay, clergy, and religious writers who have sent manuscripts to us during the past three years, we could never have experienced the success and satisfaction we have enjoyed thus far. But there are many new authors and many new topics we are eager to approach. To accomplish this, we need our readers' help. As we have stated previously, we want to hear your ideas, your questions, and your preferences. We need your recommendations and comments on what we print—what disappoints, interests, or puzzles you. We also want very much to publish manuscripts you may wish to contribute. Your letters to the editor will assist us in learning what types of articles you have found best meet your needs and desires.

You can do even more to help us improve and broaden our offerings: you can encourage knowledgeable and competent writers to contribute to our pages. So won't you please, from time to time, think about the possible writers you know who could benefit our readers all over the world, then ask them to write an article for us. Or if that isn't convenient for you, just send us the name of the person and the topic you would like to see her or him write about. We will follow up promptly and gratefully.

Linda D. Amadeo, R.N., M.S.
Senior Editor